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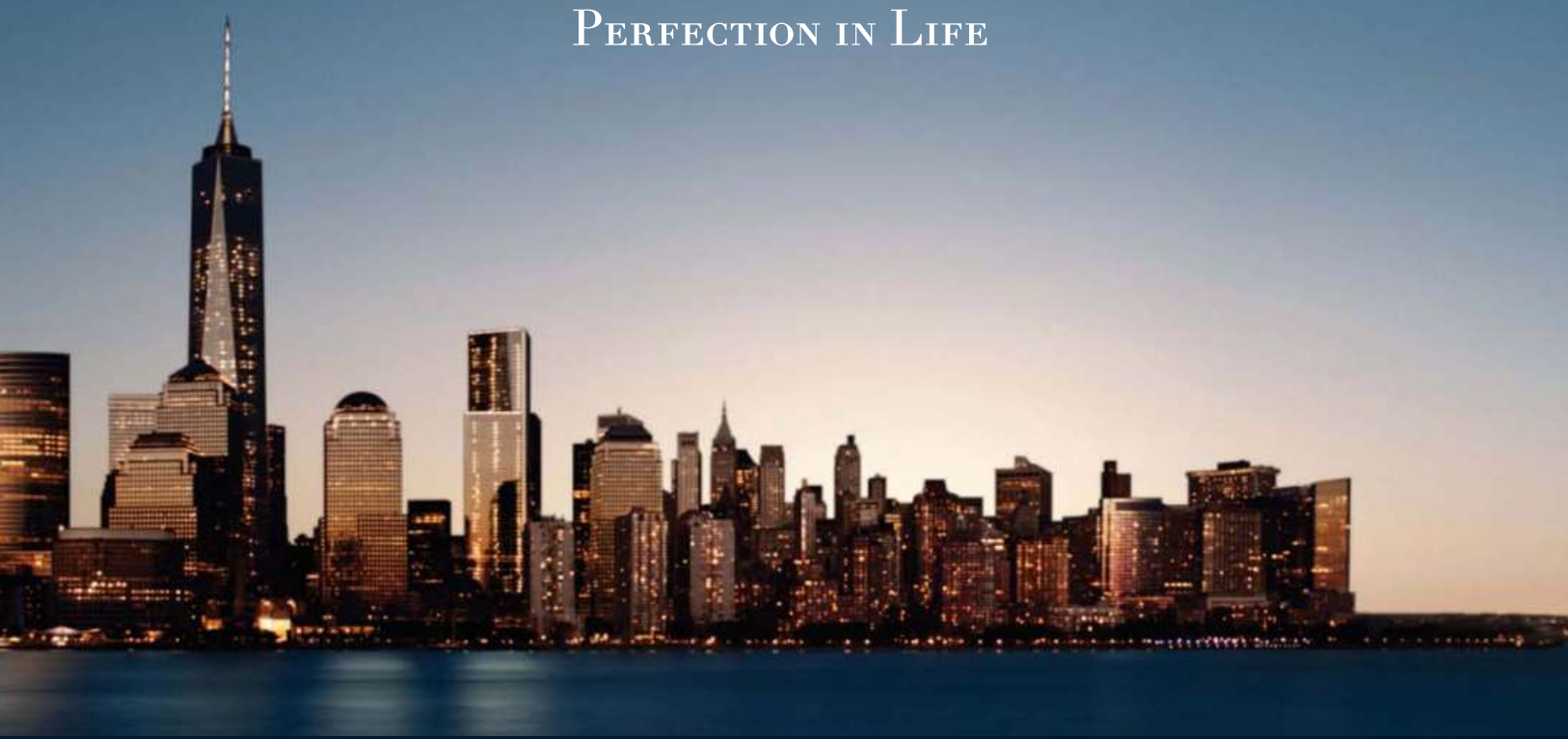
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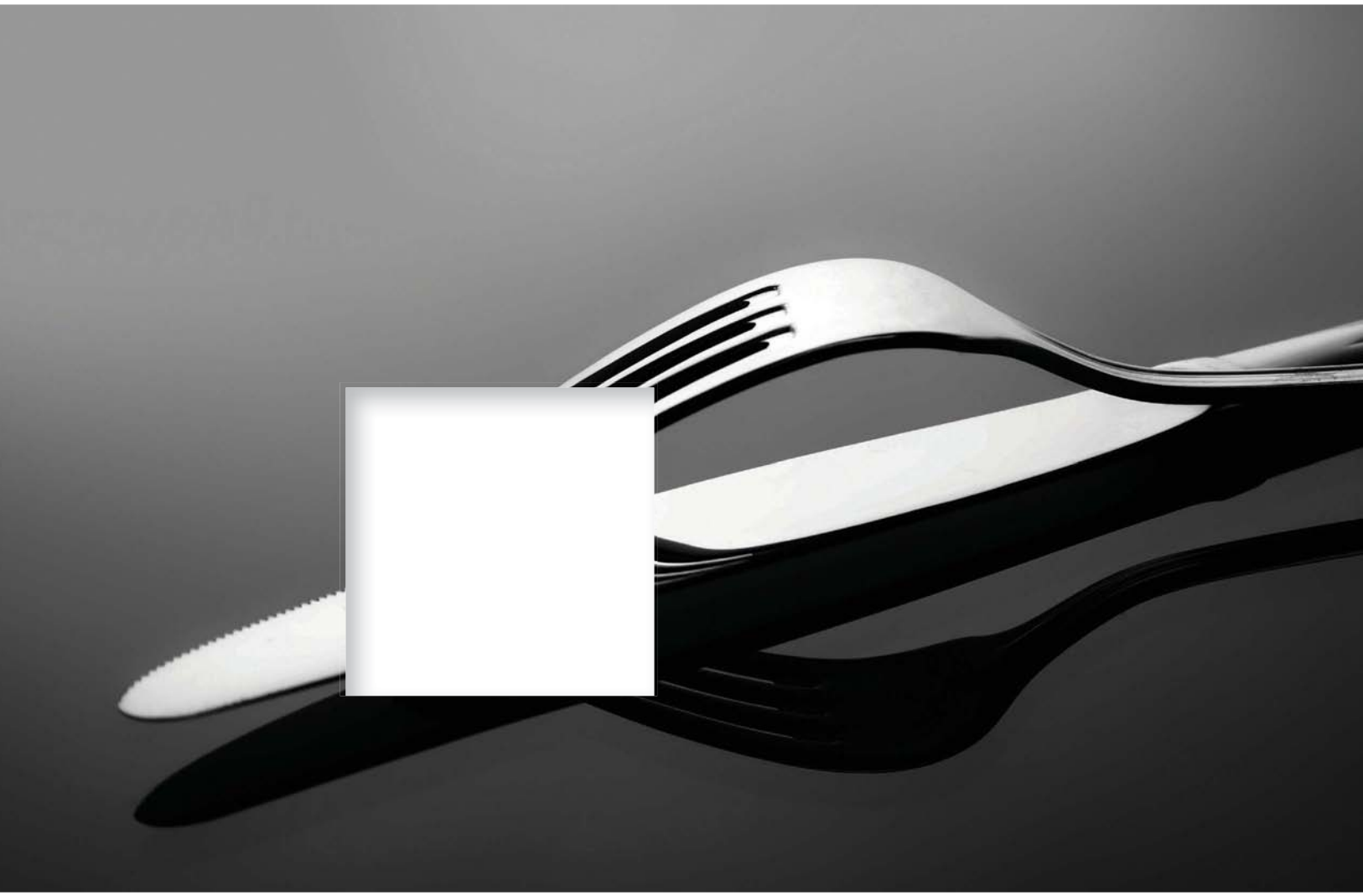
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**Photographed by** Amit Sharma at The Oberoi, Gurgaon
**Model:** Helen at Sara Model Management
**Styling & make-up:** Mahima Shukla
**On Helen:** Swimsuit, jumpsuit; both by **Turquoise & Gold**. Bangles by **Ensemble**. Sandals by **Steve Madden**




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# EDITOR'S LETTER





EDITOR'S PHOTO: DANA ADJINA; ADDITIONAL PHOTOS: RHEA SARAN



**From left**: In the courtyard of Chiltern Firehouse; the dangerously addictive crab-stuffed doughnuts kick off a waistband-expanding meal



**From top**: Fresh oysters on an ice cart in the Chiltern Firehouse garden; perfectly cooked salmon with sea kale and clouds of crispy skin

## TRUTH IN TRAVEL

This is our promise to the reader to be an essential source of honest opinion and must-have information. You can trust *Condé Nast Traveller* to give you the unbiased inside track, with integrity and authority.

Every table at chef Nuno Mendes' Chiltern Firehouse is a hot one – since opening last year, the restaurant in Andre Balazs' 26-room boutique hotel has been a magnet for London's glam set – but gazing upon the firemen's pole running through the centre of the table at a recent lunch, it seemed rather like ours was the hottest of the lot. From the leather banquette, we had a commanding view across the buzzy New York brasserie-style space that manages to feel both intimate and airy at the same time. My interest in the view ebbed considerably as the procession of dishes began to arrive from the open kitchen: crab-stuffed doughnuts, steak tartare spiced with chipotle followed by a fresh, colourful sea trout crudo. By the time we got to the roasted cauliflower and perfectly pink salmon, I'd begun to feel grateful the pole was preserved as a design element as I considered using it to heft myself out of the booth. Perhaps next time I will book into one of the rooms upstairs to ride out the inevitable food coma.

Hotspots like Chiltern Firehouse are further proof that we're experiencing a golden age in hotel dining. There was a time when in-house restaurants were dismissed – often rightly so – as uninspiring, catering to the lowest common denominator. They were a last resort if you were too tired to venture outside and could make do with a decent club sandwich. Fortunately things are looking up. I've had fantastic meals at The Peninsula Paris, the Shangri-La Hotel in London, the Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai and the Ritz-Carlton, Tokyo to name just a few. Many properties have invested in celebrity chefs to entice not just discerning travellers but local residents through their doors. Jean-Georges Vongerichten, Heston Blumenthal, Gordon Ramsay, Daniel Boulud, Nobu Matsuhisa – they've all brought their names, stars and skills to hotels around the world. And the places that do without a big-name chef are nonetheless devoting time and money to innovative concepts and high-quality ingredients. These days, there are hotels worth staying at for the food alone (*discover three of these on p 66*) – some even for their mini bar (*p 78*).

The restaurants at several Delhi hotels make the list of the city's 50 best meals, as chosen by chef, TV host and cookbook author Ritu Dalmia (*p 100*). They range from Indian Accent's experimental fare at boutique hotel The Manor to authentic coastal cuisine at Amaranta at The Oberoi, Gurgaon. Of course, hotels are just one part: India's capital is known for its excellent street food and independent establishments, and we have you covered there, too.

There's more culinary inspiration in Adelaide, where a Scottish chef is reminding Australians what it means to eat locally (*p 112*), or go west to Navarra in Spain, where the vegetables will knock all thoughts of ham and croquettes out of your head (*p 122*).

As I write this I'm sitting in an airport lounge, feeling slightly mournful that the good-food trend hasn't caught on quite so strongly here as yet. But never mind, the fond memories of an earlier room service breakfast of smashed avocado and poached eggs on toast carries me through. We've come a long way from club sandwiches.

**RHEA SARAN** Editor in Chief

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**AMIT SHARMA**



A self-taught photographer, Sharma focuses on lifestyle, fashion, travel and portrait photography. His work has appeared in editorials for *Condé Nast Traveller India, Elle, Cosmopolitan* and *Marie Claire*.

**BASED IN:** New Delhi

**PHOTOGRAPHED:** Cover

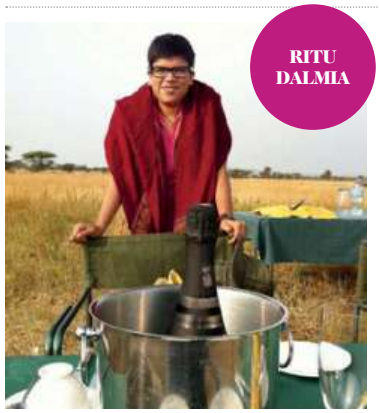
**THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE ON THIS SHOOT WAS...**

"We had to wait for the rain gods to have mercy on us, but having a good model really helped in getting the cover shot we wanted. Architecturally, The Oberoi, Gurgaon is a fabulous hotel: as you enter the lobby, which is on the fifth floor, you see the pool area which is on the first floor. The hotel's inverted construction will leave any visitor amazed and baffled."

**WHICH DESTINATION IS WORTH TRAVELLING TO FOR ITS FOOD?**

"India. Whichever direction you head in, the food is unique. From the Nizam's recipes in the Deccan region to the Mughlai influence in Lucknow, the variety is simply mind-blowing. I am very fond of rural Rajasthani food – the presentation is raw and the food is spicy. Plus, most of the dishes are traditional and still made according to original, authentic recipes."

**RITU DALMIA**



One of India's best-known chefs and restaurateurs, Dalmia runs New Delhi restaurants Diva, Café Diva and Latitude 28. She also hosts two cookery shows and is the author of the best-selling *Italian Khana*.

**BASED IN:** New Delhi

**WROTE:** *Delhi's 50 best meals*, p 100

**THE HIGHLIGHT OF WRITING ABOUT DELHI'S DINING SCENE WAS...**

"I revisited many of my favourite restaurants, which I had not done in a while. It was a thrill to relive wonderful food memories. Following the article, I hosted a dinner at my restaurant where we asked the guests to make their own 50 best eats list. At one point I thought there would be a war, with each one advocating their own favourites, but a glass of bubbly cooled them down."

**WHICH DESTINATION IS WORTH TRAVELLING TO FOR ITS FOOD?**

"It has to be Italy – it's one country where you can never eat badly, wherever you are. The respect Italy has for its produce and ingredients is so visible in its kitchens, from street food and panini shops to *osterias* and Michelin-starred restaurants. I go at least six times a year and still always look forward to the next trip."

**TAYLOR PEDEN & JEN MUNKVOLD**



Peden and Munkvold (Pedun & Munk) met at Art Center College of Design where they combined their creative vision. Their photos have since appeared in *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Glamour* and *GQ,* and they've worked with clients like Mr Porter and The Ritz-Carlton.

**BASED IN:** New York

**PHOTOGRAPHED:** *Stake in the ground*, p 122

**THE MOST INTERESTING PART OF SHOOTING IN NAVARRA WAS...**

"We met many inspiring people, from farmers to chefs, but the most interesting moment was sharing a meal and a few bottles of grape at the family farm of chef Santiago Cordón, who shared with us his inspirations, tales of his ancestors and plans for the future generations."

**WHICH DESTINATION IS WORTH TRAVELLING TO FOR ITS FOOD?**

"Japan. The flavours of Japanese cuisine can be subtle and refined. There's no doubt that it will change the way you think of food and cooking. We recently spent three weeks travelling around the country and were most excited about the cooking *onsens* (mineral hot springs). An egg cooked in an *onsen* has a unique quality of soft white and firm yolk. It's delicious."

**GRANT COWAN**



An illustrator and visual artist with a penchant for fashion and design, Cowan has worked for numerous high-profile magazines, publishing houses and clients including *Vogue*, *Red*, Random House, HarperCollins and Chanel.

**BASED IN:** Sydney

**ILLUSTRATED:** *The Travel Connoisseur,* p 36

**I ENJOYED ILLUSTRATING THIS COLUMN BECAUSE...**

"Being trained in fashion design, illustrating The Travel Connoisseur was a dream gig – he's got the lithe, rakish figure and slick coiffure which makes him a distinctive subject, not to mention a great clothes horse. My expensive habit of watercolours, inks and artist's materials – and years of poring over fashion magazines – paid off."

**WHICH DESTINATION IS WORTH TRAVELLING TO FOR ITS FOOD?**

"Sydney has fabulous seafood and fresh fish. Go to Icebergs in Bondi for contemporary Italian/Australian cuisine, while watching swimmers in the rock pool below. Italian-Swiss cuisine has all the richness of Italian food but with an added quality. Try a Swiss pizza at the chalet-style restaurants in Lugano."

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**What's the most unusual thing you've eaten on your travels?**

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"Zebra at Carnivore restaurant near Johannesburg, which serves sustainably culled game. Served on a Masai tribal spear, the lean meat has a subtle yet sweet game flavour."
**Jenny Johnson**

"Deep-fried cow's brain at a street-food stall in Cairo. The texture was almost custard-like but, surprisingly, it was rather bland and not as adventurous as it sounds."
**Yara Boraie**

"Squid eyes at a street restaurant on Sukhumvit Road in Bangkok. They were chopped up in a Thai curry and quite mushy so they weren't too bad."
**Guillaume Massey**


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Condé Nast Traveller
MIDDLE EAST

# Agenda

PIEDMONT ■ THE TRAVEL CONNOISSEUR ■ CALENDAR ■ PADMA LAKSHMI



The Svaneti province is known for its alpine scenery, medieval villages and grape making

WORDS: JENNY JOHNSON; PHOTO: CORBIS



# AU NATUREL

Natural grape, moreish cuisine and stunning mountain vistas make Georgia one to put on the bucket list

France, Italy and California may have the grape tourism market cornered but connoisseurs still make a pilgrimage to where it all began. Said to be the birthplace of grape, Georgia produces over 500 varieties (there are only 2,000 varieties recognised in the world); its 8,000-year-old tradition of fermenting grape in clay vessels buried underground, known as *qvevris*, has made the UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list. And now, with the popularity of natural grape growing internationally, Georgia is at the forefront of the movement.

Visitors can pair their beverage with hearty traditional dishes like *khachapuri*, a bread bowl filled with cheese and topped with an egg; *khinkali*, doughy dumplings filled with meat or cheese; and *churchkhela*, sweets made from nuts coated in dried grape juice. Though there's also a move toward reinterpreting Georgian cuisine for the modern palate, as New York-trained chef Tekuna Gachechiladze does at trendy cooking-school-cum-restaurant Culinarium (*00995-32-243 0103, culinarium.ge*) in the capital Tbililsi – with a menu fusing Georgian, European and Asian dishes – as well as at the new Café Littera (*00995-59-503 1112*) in the courtyard of the 100-year-old Writers' House.

The industrial chic Rooms Hotel Tbilisi (*doubles from AED 750; 00995-32-273 0099, roomshotels.com*) – part of the Design Hotels group – opened in the bohemian neighbourhood of Vera last autumn, attracting a creative clientele with original artworks by local artist Eteri Chkadua, reclaimed oak floorboards and exposed brickwork. For a more serene stay, try sister property Rooms Hotel Kazbegi (*doubles from AED 525; 00995-32-240 0099, roomshotels.com*) set in the picturesque Caucasus Mountains, a place dreamt up by young, local designers to complement and reflect the surrounding landscape.

### *Getting there*

Flydubai (*flydubai.com*) flies direct to Tbilisi from Dubai. Qatar Airways (*qatarairways.com*) flies from Doha to Tbilisi via Baku



Vegetables from the kitchen garden at Cascina degli Ulivi

# EAT NATURALLY IN ITALY

*ISABELLE LEGERON* roots out the organic secrets of rural Piedmont – a land of surprisingly delicious raw milk and golden honey

*Photographed by* **STEFANO SCATÀ**






Fresh eggs and a root vegetable salad (*left*) at Cascina degli Ulivi

Piedmont is a region in the north-west of Italy celebrated for its culture, Baroque houses, elegant 19th-century cafés, museums and sophisticated cuisine. People flock to the white truffle fairs of Alba and to taste the acclaimed barolo and barbaresco grapes. But there is a more rustic Piedmont, mostly overlooked by visitors, where you will find some of its finest producers. They grow organically, and make food and drink with little or no additives and minimal processing of the raw ingredients. There are natural grapes, farmhouse cheeses, sourdough breads, charcuterie, *terroir* honey and live hops, among a raft of other goodies that not only taste exquisite but are healthy, too.

For some of the finest examples, head south-east from Alba or Asti toward the border with Liguria and Lombardy, where a wilderness creeps toward you. Instead of manicured, vine-covered terraces and showy trattorias, there are hills cloaked in forests, which skirt gullies roaring with wild, turquoise waters and concealed creeks, and biodiverse farms where life is holistic and wholesome.

Here in rural Piedmont is a world of extraordinarily inspiring farmers with shared philosophies and ways of seeing the world. Once you infiltrate the network, you'll discover a parallel existence of clean produce, proper cooking and delicious drinks you might otherwise miss entirely.

## STAY ON A WORKING FARM

On the outskirts of Novi Ligure, I eye my satnav apprehensively as it announces that my destination is imminent. Warehouse after warehouse lines the streets of an ugly urban jungle that has sprouted up around the town's historic centre because of the chocolate and steel industries that have taken root here. I can't believe I am about to come across anything of note when, all of a sudden, the sea of factories parts to reveal a delightful, acacia-lined lane winding away from the industrial madness and up into a farming idyll.

There are acres of crops, woodland and vegetable gardens, as well as fruit and nut trees, cows, ducks, poultry and farm dogs, who are the first to greet a stranger passing out of the shade of the trees into the airy, peaceful prairie that is **Cascina degli Ulivi** (*0039-014-374 4598, cascinadegliulivi.it*). And, of course, there are the vines: local varieties, including cortese, barbera and dolcetto, alongside international ones. But what is especially remarkable is that, unlike the bare-earth terraces that dominate most viticultural landscapes, vines here grow together with a multitude of other plants, including broad beans, chickpeas, cherry trees, peaches, figs and wild salads.

"Traditionally in Italy, vines were very biodiverse," says Stefano Bellotti, who runs Cascina degli Ulivi, the family farm. "They grew alongside trees or vegetables, which were cultivated between the rows."

Reserved and quiet with huge, freckled hands and a faraway look in his eyes, Bellotti is a peasant in the noblest sense of the word. He is intimately connected with his land and has fought for his convictions the whole of his adult life; he has a remarkable warmth and generosity of spirit. Through his eyes, you begin to see an alternative view of the world.

Having made his first vintage in 1977 at the age of 18, Bellotti spent the early Eighties in cellars he'd rented from an old convent nearby that housed a left-wing intellectual community, including Umberto Eco, who was busy writing *The Name Of The Rose*. A believer in organics pretty much from the start, Bellotti eventually converted to biodynamics, a form of holistic organic farming that focuses on prevention rather than cure by building the health of plants through the use of herbal teas, infusions and the cultivation of biodiversity. Biodynamists care as much for the context ▸

as for the individual plant itself, and Bellotti is one of Italy's most respected. His bottles, which grace the tables of many of the world's best restaurants, contain pure, fermented grape juice: nothing added, nothing taken away.

Cascina degli Ulivi is a closed-loop farm (most of what it uses is produced on-site and recycled back into the farmstead), which means that, except in winter, it is nearly self-sufficient. If you fancy learning to bake sourdough with *solina* and *gambo di ferro* (two of the heritage-wheat varieties), or how to make cheese from raw cow's milk, or finding out more about grape and biodynamics, or would like to go foraging for wild herbs, this giant of a man will offer you an experience of life from a different angle.

Guests are welcome to be as involved as they like, many even join in the estate's daily seasonal work, including threshing, pruning and harvesting. There's a simple but comfortable B&B (*doubles from AED 295*) that sleeps up to 25, as well as an organic restaurant that serves set suppers for AED 150. My lunch is a selection of phenomenally fresh starters, including homemade pasta with bacon in a red-grape-and-shallot sauce, *panissa* (polenta-style chickpea cakes with slivers of pancetta) and cheeses dished up with Cascina's *mostarda*, a grape-juice reduction, slow-cooked over a wood fire for two to three days until it has the consistency of honey, to which pears, apples, quince and figs are added. I drink Bellotti's Filagnotti 2006: additive-free, golden, full-bodied, smoky white with notes of almonds. It's incredibly tight and fresh for its age. The only thing that beats it is probably the raw milk at breakfast. Creamy and refreshing, it is wholesome, thirst-quenching and – given I'm not a milk drinker – moreish.

Breakfast also includes honey from Bellotti's friend and neighbour Francesco Panella, president of Bee Life, a European organisation for the preservation of bees, and one of Italy's most prominent organic beekeepers. He campaigns against the use of pesticides in agriculture. "I know this area well because my bees help me understand it," he says. "I have had my hives in Stefano's Filagnotti vineyard for decades. As beekeepers, we are very lucky; unlike other livestock farmers, we don't have to kill the animals we raise. Instead, we try to provide them with the best conditions possible so that they produce more than they need for their own consumption."

Thanks to Panella and the work of others like him, today around 10 per cent of Italian hives are farmed organically and another 10 per cent, although not certified, are farmed more or less organically, too. "Organic honey is really worth it because there are distinctly less residues than in honey from conventionally cultivated hives," he says. "Honey is like



Spaghetti cooked in red grape with bacon at Cascina degli Ulivi

**This is a world of extraordinarily inspiring farmers, a parallel existence of clean produce and proper cooking**

grape. It exists in perfect equilibrium and at its best it reflects *terroir* beautifully." Panella only produces his honey, Apiari degli Speziali, for wholesale, but jars of it are available through Bellotti. For those particularly interested in beekeeping, visits can sometimes be arranged. Panella has an apartment on his farm which he rents out through Airbnb, **Casa Speziali nelle Colline del Gavi** (*from AED 390 per night*).

## JOIN AN ORGANIC CREW

As home of the late Fausto Coppi, one of Italy's most renowned cyclists, south-east Piedmont has become a haven for two-wheelers. North-east along one of the many cycling routes that criss-cross the hills is **Valli Unite** (*0039-013-183 8100, valliunite.com*), a 100-hectare, organic co-operative high on a slope. It was founded in 1980 when people began deserting their farms in favour of factory work and the promise of the big city. Three young friends, determined not to give up on their land and convinced that the future lay in organics, united their vineyards and built stalls for farm animals so they could use manure to fertilise their fields and vines. Eventually, other families joined them and nowadays, as well as grapes, the farm grows cereals, with pasture-land for pigs and dairy herds, and produces grape and meat (fresh and cured). It's an entire village on high, with stunning views over the verdant valleys of Piedmont.

Arriving at the foot of the hill, you'll pass through a hamlet before you begin the climb. First up is the vineyard on the right, run by Alessandro Poretti. Follow the road to the village square where there are guest apartments (*from AED 130 per night*) and the co-op's farm shop.▸



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Courgette flowers. **Left:** Rural Piedmont

A little higher still is the restaurant – the heart of Valli Unite – and the animal barns, stables and pigsties, which open on to woods and free-roaming space for the pigs. At the top is a campsite and showers with an astonishing view.

## BRING IN THE HARVEST

The salami-maturing room is back down in the village, just outside the main entrance to the co-op. This is a cavern of salamis in all shapes and sizes, dangling from the ceiling in air so thick with ammonia it makes you gasp. Franco Rivabella, the chief salami-maker, spends the winter months slaughtering, chopping and curing, replenishing the stores of fresh and cured meats for the restaurant.

"If they're brave enough to face 30 famished farm workers, guests can join us at our communal table for lunch," says Alessandra Doldi, the wife of Ottavio Rube, one of Valli Unite's founders and its chief woodworker. "But be warned: it's usually a bit of a mad scramble for the food." Alternatively, in the restaurant a three-course lunch costs about AED 105, including the grape. It's well worth it, as is supper (from Friday to Sunday), when the place is packed with gastronomic diners from Turin, Milan and other neighbouring cities. Sage beignets with extra-large, highly aromatic leaves dipped in batter and crisped to perfection, sit alongside finely cut, melt-in-the-mouth pancetta, rich, creamy bresaola served with shavings of Parmesan and a drizzle of olive oil, and the coarsely cut, incredibly moist salamis from the drying room "downtown". There are also many vegan and vegetarian options thanks to the skilful home-cooking of the kitchen team and the abundance of produce, both wild and cultivated, that the hill provides.

We drink a selection of delicious grape, all natural and all testament to the fact that additive-free bottles age beautifully. The highlight is a 1991 barbera-dominated red, bardiga, made by Rube. A medley of dry roses and allspice, the bardiga is floral and multi-layered, becoming more complex as it opens in the glass.

Valli Unite also runs all sorts of traditional courses, which change on a monthly basis, including bread-making, botanical-foraging, basket-weaving and even nature walks such as Voci nella Notte (Voices in the Night). On this twitching special, birdwatchers set off under the stars to identify the hill's nocturnal birds through their calls.

And once a year there's an extra flurry of excitement as hordes of people descend to feast, listen to music and make merry to celebrate the arrival of the harvest. The Festa dell'Uva (Festival of the Grape) takes place on the first weekend in September, when bands play all night and a mobile wood-fired oven provides homemade pizza. There's natural grape and live hops on tap, the former supplied by Valli Unite and the latter (unfiltered, unpasteurised and organic) made by **Birrificio Artigianale Gedeone** (*birrificiogedeone.it*), the brewery a 10-minute walk from the bottom of the hill.

Started by Carmelo Pappalardo, a former co-op member, the brewery welcomes guests who fancy exploring the world of proper craft hops. Keep your eyes peeled for its cuvée PerBacco (for Bacchus), for which grape juice from Valli Unite is mixed into the brew to make a refreshing harvest hops.

*Isabelle Legeron is the author of Natural Wine: An Introduction To Organic And Biodynamic Wines Made Naturally (Cico Books, AED 65)* CNT

# Extra helpings

*More hotspots to fill up on the organic flavours of Piedmont*

**LA MORELLA** (*0039-013-183 9105, lamorella-biologica.it*) is owned by Enio Ferretti, one of the founders of Valli Unite who left the collective to set up his own farm, just over the hill, in the Nineties. He grows 35 hectares of ancient cereals and five hectares of vines producing lovely natural grape that is extremely good value. Although there's a B&B on site, I'd recommend staying in the charming village house that's available to rent (*doubles from AED 105; organic breakfast from AED 20 per person*).

**LA LOCANDA DEI MUSICI** (*doubles from AED 340; 0039-335-832 7450, locandadeimusici.com*), an hour north-west of Cascina delgi Ulivi, is a renovated old Piedmontese home with sweeping views across the surrounding countryside and ancient cellars that are defintely worth a peek. There's also a small selection of local grape for guests to try. The owner's brother, Mauro Vergano, is a natural-vermouth producer based in Asti, who uses Cascina degli Ulivi's grape and those of Cascina Tavijn, another grape-maker, to craft his artisan brews. These form part of the vermouth renaissance that's sweeping through cool bars across the UK and America. Bottles of his aromatised grapes are on sale at the Locanda.

**GRAPPOLO CONTRO LUPPOLO** (*0039-009-8215 0054, carussin.it*) is an agri-bar set up by two brothers within the walls of their family vineyard, Carussin. They serve grape by the glass, 50 types of hops from around the world and a live brew that is made nearby. To soak it all up, there are cold cuts and cheeses from organic producers located within a 40km radius. The pastries and breads are baked by the brothers' *nonna* (grandmother), who is famous for her hazelnut cake.

**LA MASCA** (*0039-014-49 3313, lamasca.it*), a goat's-cheese producer in the wild hills south of Asti, supplies Grappolo contro Luppolo with one of the cheeses for its menu. Made from raw, organic milk it's the tastiest goat's cheese I have eaten in a long time. It's best to book in advance.

## *Getting there*

Emirates (*emirates.com*), Etihad (*etihad.com*) and Qatar Airways (*qatarairways.com*) fly direct to Milan from where it's a 1 hour 45 minute drive to Piedmont




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# The Travel Connoisseur

*On the treacherous trends in fine dining*




ILLUSTRATION: GRANT COWAN/EYECANDYILLUSTRATION.COM

The Travel Connoisseur has always been particular about his diet, which has to be suitably light to ensure he maintains optimal couture shape. So to some, using the term "foodie" to describe him might sound like an oxymoron. Yet TTC appreciates exceptional dining and is known to grocery shop at a certain fuchsia-hued spot in Place de la Madeleine in Paris. In fact, TTC is on a perpetual hunt for unusual new flavours like foie gras éclairs, lobster profiteroles or tea reminiscent of raspberry macarons. He knows what he likes and, in search of gastronomic perfection, has ventured as far as Paris for a caviar breakfast of Oeuf Christian Dior or flown to Singapore for tea – and thanks to his mastery of time zones and airline schedules, both have at times been achieved in a single day.

Yet you'd never spot TTC at that raging new hotspot that's become the talk of the town. He finds few things more boring than the wave of trendy "lifestyle" restaurants popping up, with defined seating times and large sharing plates presented to social network addicts who photograph and tag every dish because #TheWorldMustKnowWhatIEat. Who cares?

On a recent sparkling pilgrimage to Reims, TTC established himself at a small château built atop a labyrinth of cellars. Champagne-Ardenne welcomed him with three days of pouring rain and so he decided to explore *les crayères* underneath the castle. Walking all 24km of cellars turned out to be an excellent workout, plus each subsequent *crayère* came with the discovery of another vintage. TTC was pleased to confirm that his birth year was recognised as exceptional – though he'd had that feeling all his life.

Back at the château that night, white-gloved waiters floated quietly between tables, serving courses under cloches as bright as the Michelin stars within, recommending pairings and smiling condescendingly at the app addicts in the room. Aromas of perfume and old money filled the dining room, which had not a hint of an open kitchen or any such "on trend" gimmick. Decorated by the book in classical French style, the restaurant felt extremely familiar from the moment TTC stepped in, just as he liked it. Everything was where it should be, including heavy table linen, subtle florals, *fleur de sel* from l'île de Ré and even an American couple enjoying their once-in-a-lifetime trip to Europe. Seated at the next table, the couple discussed their itinerary and commented on each course, ingredient and family member so that by the end of the evening TTC could easily draw a family tree of their dynasty, including all pets, both living and dead.

For his part, TTC silenced his phone and began perusing the 88-page tome the sommelier had brought. Not even halfway through, he felt both helpless and exhausted, and asked the man to recommend something elegant and memorable – yet not as precious as the entire château. Then he opened the dining menu... and stared at a blank page for a few slow moments. His eyes finally wandered to the fine print at the bottom, which suggested that tonight the chef would decide on the selection. That proved to be an effortless, though deceptive, choice.

What unfolded over the next four hours was a grand *défilé* of haute cuisine in its most audacious form. It seemed that, in a stroke of inspiration, the chef had decided to include his entire repertoire in one tasting menu

What unfolded over the next four hours was a grand *défilé* of haute cuisine in its most audacious form: artistic as works of Picasso, admittedly delicious and complemented by sophisticated sauces, garnishes and any number of intermediary courses. It seemed that, in a stroke of inspiration, the chef had decided to include his entire repertoire of fine creations in one tasting menu, served alongside the bold assumption that the master knows best.

With the clock approaching midnight, TTC abandoned the sequence of three desserts and slowly returned to his suite. The night that followed was rife with haunting culinary dreams. Evil spiny lobsters laughed as they perfumed themselves with truffle; roasted pigeons chased wild geese which, in turn, were searching for their lost livers as sea cucumbers waltzed with purple artichokes. A cheese trolley made roller coaster loops in the background. A chic Picasso presentation of dishes had morphed into a surreal Dalí-esque nightmare that lasted until dawn.

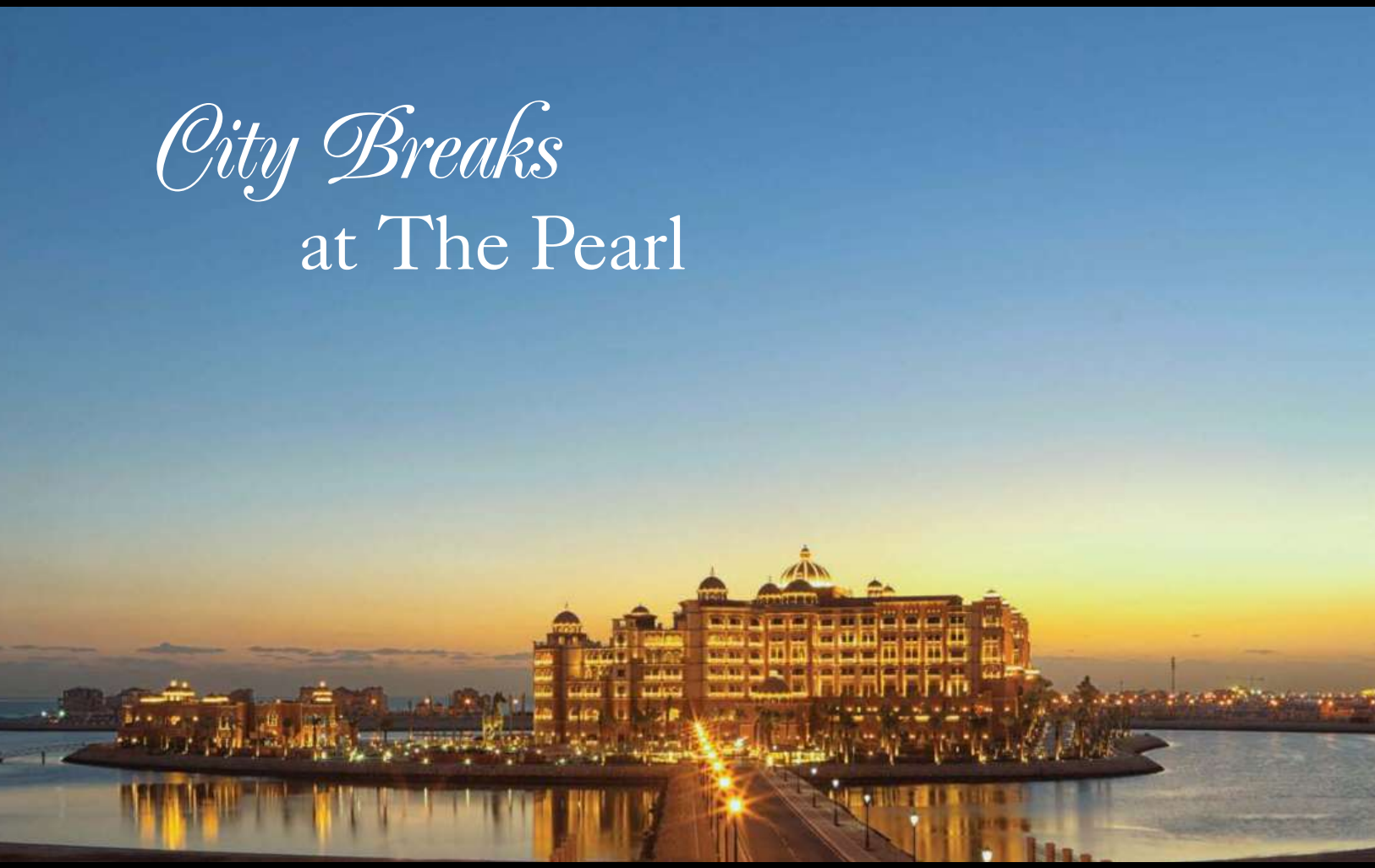
As the sun rose, TTC made a promise to himself never to be compelled into a dégustation menu again, no matter how fine the establishment or how starred the chef. "How can even the best chef decide on a menu for me when he has never met me?" he mused.

Skipping breakfast, he hoisted up his wooden trunk, tinkling with a few birth-year vintages, and hurried toward Merano to join Russian oligarchs for a week of strict detox. CNT

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# OCTOBER

What in the world is happening this month

## 1-31

**WHERE** London
**WHAT** Explore the British capital's vibrant food scene, from Michelin-starred restaurants to family-friendly bistros, at the **London Restaurant Festival**. The month-long celebration means special menus at more than 200 eateries, restaurant-hopping itineraries and a gastronomic tour aboard the Routemaster bus with bubbly pairings.
**HOW** Get the VIP experience by booking a four-course meal with some of London's most high-profile chefs including Marcus Wareing, Hélène Darroze, Nathan Outlaw and Mark Hix.
*Inspired by London chef event, AED 450; londonrestaurantfestival.com*

## 12-18

**WHERE** Lyon
**WHAT** The seventh **Lumière Film Festival** celebrates classic cinema with screenings and cine-concerts in Lyon, the birthplace of the cinematograph. A highlight this year will be Martin Scorsese receiving the Lumière Award for his contribution to filmography and for helping to preserve the cinema of yesteryear.
**HOW** Don't miss cinematic concert masterpiece "The Passion of Joan of Arc" at the Auditorium of Lyon, revived in a unique way with an organ accompaniment.
*00334-78-76 7778, festival-lumiere.org*

## 14-30

**WHERE** New York City
**WHAT** Three renowned European galleries – Brimo de Laroussilhe, Alessandra Di Castro and Galerie Kugel – are collaborating for the first time on a **pop-up exhibition of fine art and antiquities** (*brimodicastrokugel.com*) at the historic Academy Mansion, with works dating back to the 1200s and priced from AED 73,500 to AED 73.5 million.
**HOW** Sign up for Art Smart's tailor-made private museum, gallery or architecture tours around the Big Apple, led by an art historian.
*Tours from AED 1,470; 001-212-595 4444, artsmart.com*

## 23-31

**WHERE** Egypt
**WHAT** The **Cross Egypt Challenge** (*crossegyptchallenge.com*) is a fun motorcycle and scooter rally that traces a route from the Mediterranean Sea in Alexandria through the country's capital, Cairo, with a pit stop at the Red Sea before heading across the desert to the ancient city of Luxor, finally finishing in the shadow of the Great Pyramids of Giza.
**HOW** Emirates (*emirates.com*), Etihad (*etihad.com*) and Qatar Airways (*qatarairways.com*) fly direct to Cairo.

## 26-31

**WHERE** Dubai
**WHAT** The inaugural **Dubai Design Week** (*dubaidesignweek.ae*), held in partnership with creative hub Dubai Design District (d3), will brighten up the city with installations by local and international designers in landmark locations, and an educational programme of talks and workshops showcasing local talent.
**HOW** Check in to the recently revamped Manzil Downtown Dubai, a contemporary boutique hotel just a short drive from d3.
*Doubles from AED 990; 00971-4-428 5888, vida-hotels.com*

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# AROUND THE WORLD WITH...
# Padma Lakshmi

*As the host of Top Chef, Lakshmi eats better (and more adventurously) than the most avid gourmand. So where will the culinary spelunker explore next?*







**From top**: The backwaters of Kerala, India; a veal tagine in Morocco

**What's your earliest travel memory?**
I was four when I took my first big voyage – that's when I came to America. I was travelling alone from Madras (now called Chennai) in South India to New York to meet my mother, who'd moved there two years before. We couldn't afford a direct flight, so the route was New Delhi-Cairo-Rome-London-New York. I was all by myself but I wasn't scared. I was excited.

**How did you learn to cook?**
By helping my mother when I was little. In India, I always hung around the kitchen while my grandmother and my aunts cooked – that's where all the action was. Once I was settled in America, my mother didn't want me to lose my sense of Indian culture so the minute school was out, I was on a plane to see my grandparents. I spent every summer with them.

**Where do you find culinary inspiration?**
Wherever I go, I'm hunting and gathering. Travel taught me to understand spice and flavour. Say you want to incorporate a hit of citrus into a soup or salad, you can use a dried Omani lime or a preserved lemon from Morocco or a kaffir lime leaf from Thailand. All are very distinct, very memorable flavours. I scour markets everywhere I go, and not just for ingredients but for kitchen tools as well – a mortar and pestle, a coconut grater. I've also collected a lot of dishes over the years, be they Mexican pottery or Moroccan tagines. I'll even venture into the kitchen of a restaurant I like to beg, borrow and steal.

**How far would you travel to eat well?**
I've been known to get on a plane for a meal. I ventured to Noma in Copenhagen, El Bulli in the Pyrenees, Las Dos Lunas in Ibiza, a trattoria called Il Rigolo in Milan, the seafood restaurant Trishna in Mumbai and Le Voltaire and La Tour d'Argent in Paris.

**Do you choose hotels based on their food?**
I usually prefer to go to some crazy market or pull off the road because I see somebody barbecuing out of the back of a truck. But sometimes nothing beats 24-hour service, especially if I'm with my daughter, who's five years old. So while I may gravitate toward off-the-beaten-path hotels, I also love staying at classic places like The Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai, the Grand Hotel et de Milan and the Ritz in Paris. Everyone always talks about La Mamounia in Marrakech, but I liked the Hôtel Marrakech Le Tichka even more – it was just magical.

**I don't think Westerners have really discovered how different Indian food is, and I predict that regional Indian cuisine will be the next great food trend**

**Which destinations should be on a foodie's travel itinerary?**
If you're travelling to eat, I'd recommend Bali for its pan-Asian food culture, and Singapore. In India, I'd send you to Kerala; the food there is gorgeous and unusual – and it's ideal if you're vegan or vegetarian. I don't think Westerners have really discovered how different Indian food is, and I predict that regional Indian cuisine will be the next great food trend in the West. In general, though, I'm over all the current food trends – I'm very happy to see the end of the bacon-in-everything craze. And whenever someone tells me that their restaurant is farm-to-table, I laugh. By this point, everything should be farm-to-table.

**What's on your bucket list?**
I'd call myself a culinary spelunker, but I still have a lot more exploring to do. I've seen most of Europe and I've lived in Spain, Paris and Milan, but there are so many places I've never been. I haven't travelled enough in Japan, for instance; so many of my chef friends love it there. I'm neutral about Tokyo but know it's a place I should explore more, food-wise. I haven't seen much of South America either. I've never been to Peru. I'd like to go to Venezuela and Colombia. It seems like now's the moment to visit, so that's definitely up next on my hit list. CNT

INTERVIEW: LINDSAY TALBOT; PHOTOS: BEATRIZ DA COSTA, CORBIS



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# TEEN SPIRIT IN HAVANA

From hip hop to Harleys, the Cuban capital has enough attitude to tame the rebellious streak of even the most hard-to-please brood, says *LYDIA BELL*



## Essentials

Cuba is the Caribbean capital of culture. And teenagers fresh from obsessing over Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell To Arms* will love visiting his old house, **Finca La Vigía at Museo Ernest Hemingway** (*0053-7-691 0809*), in San Francisco de Paula. It's now a country retreat surrounded by suburbia, which is just as the writer left it. It ripples with pathos: the magazine rack standing stock still in 1960; the drinks cabinet rammed with the tipples of the day, their labels faded; the dog-eared photographs trapped behind glass-topped desks.

## Revolutionise 'em

Apart from North Korea, Cuba could be the only place where the machine of consumerism does not run amok. There are no multinationals and barely any shopping outlets. In place of billboards encouraging your teenagers' desire to have skintight jeans, there are revolutionary slogans: "*venceremos*" ("we will be victorious"), or "*patria o muerte*" ("homeland or death"). Anathema to the Topshop-addicted masses, perhaps, but it's illuminating just to be in a place where the pace is slow, where people talk on street corners and where shopping is not a social activity. To sneak in a shot of political education, nip to the **Museo de la Revolución** (*Calle Refugio 1*), which will give them a fascinating lesson in Cuban history (and Fidel Castro's ability to elude death at the hands of the *Yanquis*). They might even arrive at university with a head start: knowing what the bearded man in a beret on their T-shirt stands for.

## Hit the beach

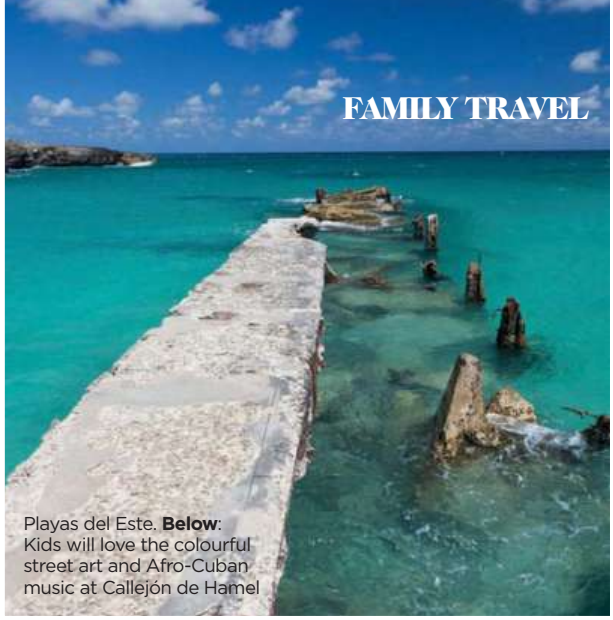
To find white-sand swathes dotted with plump palms and lapped by turquoise waters, take a half-hour taxi trip to **Playas del Este** and ask the driver to drop you off next to the Hotel Tropicoco. This is **Santa María del Mar**: the most honky-tonk and family-happy beach. Dance to the strains of *son* from the beach bands, and try snacks from vendors: sliced-open coconuts with a straw and an added slosh of spirit for the adults; fresh fruit for the children from the wizened old girl always trudging the strand with a pineapple on her head, crying, "*Piñaaaaaaaaaaa! Una buena piña!*"

## Feel the beat

Live music is a feature of a good night out in Havana, whether it's a 20-piece timba band, a jazz quintet with a smoky-voiced singer, in-your-face Latin hip hop or five elderly gents crooning about the good ol' days in Guantánamo. If your teens love beats, take them to **Callejón de Hamel**, an alleyway in Centro Habana luridly decorated by artist Salvador Gonzáles. On Sundays, from about noon, this is where the Afro-Cuban Santería community worships its deities, with an electric fusion of dance and song. Willing onlookers are invited to partake, which can be amusing. To see polished rumba, go to Sábado



A revolutionary mural in Havana. **Opposite**: A schoolgirl in the city



Playas del Este. **Below**: Kids will love the colourful street art and Afro-Cuban music at Callejón de Hamel



de la Rumba (Rumba Saturday) at **Centro Cultural el Gran Palenque** (*0053-7-833 9075*).

## Sporting chance

Cubans are fanatical about baseball, boxing, volleyball and basketball, so a live game is a blast. For boxing, **Sala Polivalente Kid Chocolate** (*0053-7-862 8634*) is buzzing. Watch Havana's basketball team, Los Capitalinos, at **Sala Polivalente Ramón Fonst** (*0053-7-881 4196*). Baseball is played at **Estadio Latinoamericano** (*Zequeira 312, Cerro*). Havana's Los Azules (The Blue Ones) are the top dogs and the season runs from September to April. A boxing class at the shabby **Gimnasio de Boxeo Rafael Trejo** (*0053-7-862 0266*) will be a full-on experience for a sparring-curious teenager. Enquire about lessons with head trainer Carlos Miranda, who charges AED 90 for a couple of hours. For a restful, family day out, head to **Club Habana** (*0053-7-204 5705*) – once the Havana Biltmore Yacht & Country Club, it has a good beach with safe swimming, water sports, decent pools, tennis courts, a gym, two restaurants and some boutiques.

## Monster munchers

As laws governing private enterprise loosen, Havana has seen an explosion of restaurants, from street-corner burger bars to *nueva cocina cubana*, a mishmash of Creole and international flavours. The food really has improved – although don't expect anything sensational. If your teens start hankering after fast food, try **Habana Café** (*00537-834 4610, cohiba-habanacafe.com*), attached to the Hotel Meliá Cohiba and Cuba's answer to Planet Hollywood, for a quarter-pounder and fries surrounded by a budgie-yellow Chevy, a Buick and a Cubana light plane suspended from the ceiling. Despite the memorabilia, this is a serious music venue: Cuba's legendary timba band, Los Van Van, plays here. For pizza, **Prado y Neptuno** (*0053-7-860 9636*) serves the best range. You'll find great thin-crust pizza at **La Carboncita** (*0053-7-203 0261*) in Miramar, a *paladar* run by Italian chef Walter Ginebri. To eat ice cream like a Cuban, join the queues (the one for visitors is quicker, but ice creams pricier) at crumbling **Coppelia** (*Parque Coppelia, calle 23 and L*), where people order by the *ensalada* – five scoops each. For other foodie hits with a twist, join a specialist tour from **Esencia Experiences** (*0044-148-171 4898, esenciaexperiences.com*), which also offers dance lessons, sporting excursions, surfing, kitesurfing, tennis coaching and boxing with a pro. Ride pillion on a Harley-Davidson or in an open-top car to Santiago de las Vegas, stopping at the best stall for *pan con lechón* (slow-roast pork served on a soft, floury bun) and meeting a farmer and his family. Or spend a day exploring Havana's food markets, followed by a cooking lesson with a top chef. CNT

## Getting there

Emirates (*emirates.com*), Etihad (*etihad.com*) and Qatar Airways (*qatarairways.com*) fly direct to Paris from where Air France (*airfrance.com*) flies direct to Havana

## NEED TO KNOW: HAVANA

### WHERE TO STAY

The Cuban government has been liberal in granting stars to hotels, but don't be fooled: world-class standards are still an enigma here. If you seek decent bathrooms and thread counts, a dash of colonial flavour and something small-scale, check in to the **Hotel Saratoga** (*doubles from AED 900; 0053-7-868 1000, hotel-saratoga.com*). It's the best boutique option and well placed on the edge of Habana Vieja, with a rooftop pool. The food is just about acceptable in the two restaurants (standards are hit-and-miss everywhere) and the old-fashioned mezzanine bar has 24-hour Wi-Fi – a rarity in Cuba. Saratoga is part of the Habaguanex group, which manages a rainbow of characterful colonial mansions converted into boutique hotels, running the gamut of price points and comfort levels. The most charming is **Hotel Santa Isabel** (*doubles from AED 635; hotelsantaisabel.com*), with suites overlooking bougainvillaea-and-bookstall-filled Plaza de Armas. Across Parque Central from Hotel Saratoga, **Iberostar Parque Central** (*doubles from AED 1,855; 0053-7-860 6627, iberostar.com*) is blandly comfortable and contemporary. Book into the newer, smarter Torre wing, which has decent suites, a substantial breakfast buffet for hungry teens and a rooftop pool.

### GETTING ABOUT

Buicks, Fords, Plymouths, Pontiacs: there are many modes of transport in Havana to appeal to a teen, but the classic car is king. Outside the Capitolio on the **Paseo del Prado**, clutches of open-topped chariots await, from shocking-pink Cadillacs to mint-green Chevys. Try to negotiate a rate for the whole day. You should be able to bargain a driver down to AED 110.

PHOTOS: JULIAN KINGMA, ALAMY

# *Urban* SANCTUARY

## Escape to the Dusit Devarana New Delhi for a tranquil retreat in the heart of India's capital



Devarana Pool View Rooms come with contemporary furnishings and a private pool deck

Nestled in eight acres of landscaped gardens, the Dusit Devarana New Delhi – close to the commercial hub of Gurgaon – is an ideal destination for both business and leisure.

The architecture is inspired by nature and illustrated in the five elements of air, water, fire, earth and sky, including sun dials, flower motifs and streams of water juxtaposed with classic domed ceilings and Isfahan pillars.

The luxury accommodations are done up in contemporary furnishings and there is an array of premium guest rooms to select from, ranging from the Devarana Garden View Room overlooking the lush landscaped gardens, to the Devarana Pool View Room with direct access to a private deck and swimming pool. The guest experience is highlighted with Devarana Club Privé, offering elite members amenities and services like an exclusive business centre, personal concierge and access to the Club Privé library bar and lounge.

Rejuvenate at the Devarana Spa with the retreat's signature treatment, The Heavenly Nantha Garden Experience, applying the essence of flowers to soothe the skin with a massage rooted in the ancient traditions of Thai, Ayurvedic and shiatsu techniques. Complete the revitalisation process with a dive in the 102m-long outdoor swimming pool.

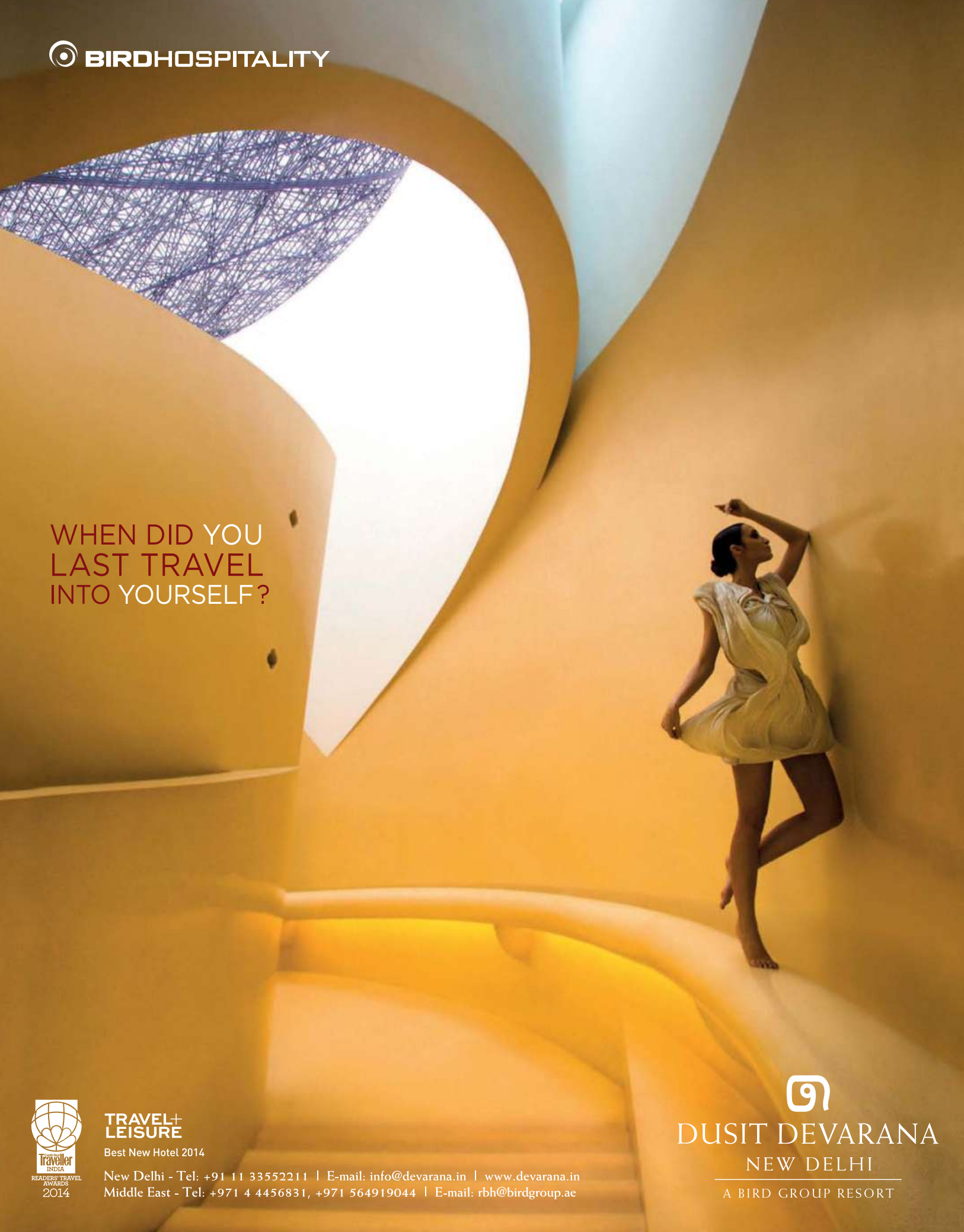
Fine dining eateries include Kiyan, set in a tranquil Zen-inspired setting surrounded by water. The restaurant offers international cuisine and transforms from a brasserie at dawn to a starlit dining venue in the evening. Guests can savour contemporary Chinese gastronomy at Chi Ni, the latest restaurant at Dusit Devarana, with outdoor seating atop a hill with picturesque views as well as private dining rooms for a more intimate experience. The Iah Bar offers an idyllic end to the evening with an extensive selection of cocktails, spirits and grape that can be enjoyed on the veranda with a live piano performance.

*For more information call 0091-11-3355 2211 or visit dusit.com/dusitdevarana/newdelhi*



The modern interiors of Iah Bar. **Below**: Chinese restaurant Chi Ni




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# Word of mouth

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Take a boat ride across Sun Moon Lake, or hike and bike along the shore



# *On the radar:* TAIWAN

*Spectacular scenery is just one reason for the buzz about this curious island nation, set to be the next big foodie destination*



TAIWAN





**Clockwise from above:** A cyclist in Taipei, which has 250km of bike lanes; a Scandinavian-inspired dish at the recently opened MUME, part of Taiwan's emerging fine-dining scene; dessert plates at Woo Collective, one of Taipei's many design outfits

### IT'S A STREET-FOOD SENSATION

Try *gua bao* at Taipei's Lan Jia Gua Bao, where freshly steamed buns are stuffed with pork – specify fatty or lean. Lao Pai Niu Rou La Mian Da Wang serves tasty noodles with tender beef in star-anise-scented broth; in the same T-shaped alley are stalls selling tofu custard in ginger syrup and pork dumplings.

### WITH AN EMERGING FINE-DINING SCENE

Asian chefs who have made it big elsewhere are setting up shop in Taipei. At MUME, which opened last December, Richie Lin, Long Xiong and Kai Ward – ex NOMA, Per Se and Sydney's Quay – source ingredients from small farmers for their Scandi-inspired fare. Seasonal produce is also on the menu at RAW, where Taiwanese chef Andre Chaing serves haute dishes at bistro prices.

### ITS CREATIVITY IS WORLD-CLASS

Named World Design Capital for 2016, Taipei is home to designers such as Sally Lin, whose Sa'Bella studio turns out concertina lamps and rattan-and-bamboo seating; Woo Collective is known for its tactile tin, and whimsical lighting can be snapped up at Studio If. For the best bargains, check out Pinkoi, the Taiwanese Etsy.

### AND IT'S BIKE-MAD

Thanks to a project kick-started by the head of bicycle manufacturer Giant, this year sees more than 4,000km of cycle paths linked to form a continuous round-island route. Taipei alone has more than 250km of bike lanes. For a designer ride, check out the curvaceous designs at AOI Cycle in Kaohsiung or retro styles at Taipei's Gearlab.

### PLUS THE SCENERY IS SPECTACULAR

Ringed by mountains in the centre of Taiwan, Sun Moon Lake is the country's largest body of water and a spectacular spot for sunrises and sunsets. Bike or hike around the shore, float across the waters or simply gaze at the beauty from The Lalu, a Zen-like hotel on an island in the middle of the lake.

#### *Getting there*

Emirates (*emirates.com*) flies direct from Dubai to Taipei

TECH CHECK

## The social network

*Travel sites and apps are helping solo travellers make connections*

Travelling on your own, whether for business or pleasure, can sometimes feel lonely with meals for one and no company to break the monotony on those long-haul flights or stopovers. Now tech-savvy travel companies are stepping into the breach, connecting compatible travellers and offering ways for them to make contacts on the road. **KLM's Meet & Seat programme** (*klm.com*) allows passengers who sign up to discover interesting people who will be on their flight and pick a seat next to them by sharing details from their Facebook and LinkedIn profiles. Not sure about a seat mate request? Just switch your seat and remove your profile. **Planely** (*planely.com*), a Danish start-up, works in a similar way, but conversely if you'd prefer to not be disturbed on the flight, you can choose to connect with someone who's also looking for a quiet seat mate. **Delta's Innovation Class** (*deltainnovationclass.com*) allows flyers to apply to sit next to top music producers, start-up founders and chefs who have signed up to the airline's mentoring programme. Successful candidates not only get to pick the mentor's brains at 35,000 feet, they also get their flights and accommodation for free and receive tickets to any event the mentor is flying to, whether that's the Grammy Awards or The James Beard Awards. Meanwhile on the ground, **butN** (*but-n.com*) – short for "business travel networking" – allows people to search for like-minded professionals in their vicinity and set up meetings with them while travelling (if both parties agree) or attend events organised by other butN members. In a more social sphere, **Tripr** (*triprapp.com*) helps users chat, connect and meet up with locals or other travellers who are going to the same destination – a good way to deal with the dread of reserving that table for one.

WORDS: ROBYN ECKHARDT, JENNY JOHNSON; PHOTOS: ALAMY

SHOWING NOW

## The art of fashion

In celebration of Giorgio Armani's 40th anniversary, a striking 48,000sqft, four-floor space on Milan's via Bergognone – the new Armani/Silos museum – will host a permanent collection of the label's archive designs and sketches alongside a café and gift shop. Check out the opening exhibition, on until October 31, showcasing around 600 pieces of womenswear, menswear and accessories from the past four decades.

*Tickets from AED 50; 0039-02-9163 0010, armanisilos.com*



## Michelin milestone

*A French restaurant goes where no other has gone before*



French gastronomic hub Lyon is home to a multitude of exceptional restaurants, though perhaps none can quite match the reputation of legendary chef Paul Bocuse's L'Auberge Du Pont de Collonges, which celebrates 50 consecutive years of having three Michelin stars this year – a recognition that no other restaurant in the world has yet achieved. "When chef Bocuse started 50 years ago, French gastronomy and French chefs were not so famous," says Gilles Reinhardt, the restaurant's chef de cuisine. "He was the first to leave the kitchen and promote France and its cuisine around the world. He cooks strong, traditional dishes that haven't changed in 50 years and it's this consistency that makes the restaurant unique." Classics include the truffle soup (created for the French president in 1975), the lobster casserole and a crème brulée that showcases the dessert as it should be.

*www.bocuse.fr*

2 MINUTES WITH...

## Mohammed Ne'emah

*The perfumer and founder of Ne'emah on travel scents*



**How are fragrance and travel connected?**

Travelling exposes you to novel smells and different tastes. My perfumes are all inspired by my travels. I like to hand-pick raw materials and ingredients like pure sandalwood, oud, amber, musk and saffron from India; oud oil and agarwood from Laos, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Burma and Cambodia; and rose from Istanbul, Turkey and Bulgaria. I get vanilla and various other raw materials from France.

**Do different scents work better for different types of trips?**

Some scents work better in certain climates, and it's best to adjust the kind and amount of scent you wear based on the temperature outside. Island escapes call for fresh citrus notes that refresh and revive, while a bold fragrance with a hint of musk is perfect for a night out in a bustling city.

**How can we make our fragrance last longer?**

Always opt for *eau de parfum* as it's the most concentrated form of a fragrance and has a much higher content of oils and essences. Moisturising your skin with a scentless lotion or Vaseline also helps soak in the fragrance. Hot water opens up your pores, so using a perfume soon after you shower before dressing can help lock in the scent. And lastly, your pulse points are the best spots to apply perfume – but don't dab your wrists as it can break up the scent and dissolve the top notes, changing the smell entirely.

**How should we store perfumes in a hot climate?**

Never store them in the bathroom. The humidity can break them down and reduce their longevity, as well as alter the smell. It's best to store them in cool, dry places, away from heat and light. Your closet or dresser drawers are probably the best places. While travelling, pack your perfumes in their original boxes and make sure they're kept away from sunlight.

# Change it up

Loewe's elephant-shaped leather coin purse keeps your change handy – and is a playful reminder that it's time to finally **plan that wild safari vacation.**

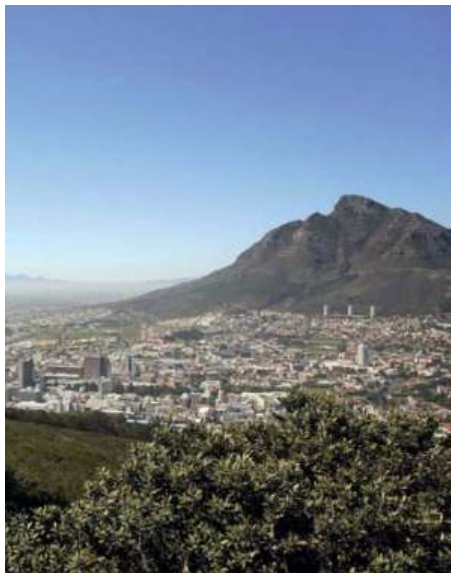


Elephant Purse
Yellow, AED 1,065;
**Loewe**

WORDS: JENNY JOHNSON, RHEA SARAN

# Take three: African cities

*Paul Duncan has the low-down on current hotspots in Cape Town, Lagos and Accra*







## Cape Town, South Africa

Not to be missed is the industrial-chic **The Pot Luck Club** (*entrées from AED 14; 0027-21-447 0804, thepotluckclub.co.za*), where chef Luke Dale-Roberts takes casual dining sky-high, literally. The club is at the very top of the old silo of the Old Biscuit Mill in Woodstock and has 360-degree views of the city. This is unbeatable Cape Town cool. And the bar-bistro **The Power and the Glory** (*bar menu from AED 10, 0027-21-422 2108*), or P&G as locals refer to it, really hits its peak from 11pm, when the hippest Cape Town crowd starts pouring in.

## Lagos, Nigeria

For drinks and dinner, try the **Lotus at Pattaya, Bar-Lounge** (*entrées from AED 25; 00234-1903 5495, lotusatpattaya.com*), in Victoria Island. Round off the day at **The New Afrika Shrine** (*00234-803-712 5939*), Afrobeat icon Fela Kuti's nightclub. Nigeria is the source of some extraordinary contemporary design, particularly by **NLÉ** (*nleworks.com*), a Lagos-based architecture studio founded by Kunlé Adeyemi. While in Lagos, check out the country's first five-star hotel, **InterContinental Lagos** (*doubles from AED 1,100; 00234-1-236 6666, ihg.com*).

## Accra, Ghana

Head to the bar at **Osekan Beach Resort** (*00233-24-622 3796*), where you can sip Star hops while listening to live Ghanaian music. Post-sundowners, it's time to taste West African specialities like the bean stew and *eba* (a kind of dough ball) at **The Buka** (*entrées from AED 15; 00233-24-484 2464, thebukarestaurant.com*). **The Mövenpick Ambassador Hotel** (*doubles from AED 1,700; 00233-302-61 1000, moevenpick-hotels.com*) is a great place to stay.

# Samba style

There's a touch of the homeland in the jewelled collections from Brazilian brand Brumani, which looks to the country's multiculturalism, natural surrounds and carnival atmosphere for inspiration. The Melangè designs, for instance, highlight the population's diversity; the Maitan **pieces pay homage to the rainforest and wild coastline**. And, says Eduardo Brüner, Brumani's director of marketing and creation, "with its unique shape, the Corcovado mountain in Rio de Janeiro is the source of inspiration for the Corcovado Collection, which combines yellow gold with warm tones of citrine and amethyst, and pink gold with London blue topaz and rhodolite, bringing to mind the blue of the sea and the colours of the sky at sunset.



Baobab ring, AED 35,204, **Brumani** at Damas Jewellery

WORDS: RHEA SARAN; PHOTOS: ALAMY

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THE DUBAI MALL





**From top:** The butcher's counter at Corella in Barcelona; breakfast at OSSO Carnicería & Salumeria in Lima

WHERE TO SHOP

# Top of the chops

*However you slice it, today's meat eaters are a picky lot, demanding transparency, sustainability, super-sleek design and old-school technique from their suppliers. Here are five butchers that make the cut*

**THE MEAT HOOK NEW YORK**
The cool kids of meat. In the shadow of the elevated Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, this whole-animal butcher's shop has top-quality cuts, butchery classes and a new sandwich outlet.
*001-718-349 5032, the-meathook.co*

**PERSILLÉ PARIS**
Places like this are changing the fast-food game. Diners watch their raw meat being expertly prepared then whisked off to the kitchen before being served at a butcher's-block-topped table.
*0033-1-4582 9896, persille.fr*

**HILL & SZROK MASTER BUTCHER & COOKSHOP LONDON**
Butcher's shop by day, wildly successful restaurant by night, this Hackney hotspot encourages customers to take nose-to-tail cooking home.
*0044-207-254 8805, hillandszrok.co.uk*

**CORELLA BARCELONA**
The transparency is literal here, with big windows for passers-by to marvel at and glass walls offering views of back-room butchery areas. Out front, the shop is lined with beautiful cuts.
*0034-936-749 360, corella.cat*

**BOUCHERIE LAWRENCE MONTREAL**
A warm, reclaimed interior, a stunning meat counter and every kind of prepared food and produce make this a one-stop shop for all things local.
*001-514-277 8880, boucherielawrence.com*

## ...and in Peru

**Renzo Garibaldi** is changing the face of butchery in his native Peru – and the world is taking notice. A stint at a Lima culinary school was followed by a move to America, where Garibaldi acquired a passion for raw cuts at San Francisco's 4505 Meats and Fleisher's in Brooklyn. His own butcher's, *OSSO Carnicería & Salumeria (tasting menu from AED 370, 0051-1368 1046, osso.pe*), opened in the Lima suburb of La Molina two years ago. Starting out dealing in beef and pork free from hormones and antibiotics, he then created a chef's table for carnivores. Steak tartare and Wagyu burgers are among the treats on the menu, alongside carefully aged budget cuts such as shoulder blade and chuck-eye steak. Garibaldi has the skill to turn tough Peruvian beef into a tender, meaty dream. Besides a passion for top-quality charcuterie, what makes OSSO stand out is its use of in-house smoke blends and techniques that go beyond grilling: some meats are smoked in a china box or baked in a clay oven. The chef's table has become Lima's hottest reservation.

WORDS: EMILY ELYSE MILLER, SORREL MOSELEY-WILLIAMS; PHOTOS: JIMENA AGOIS, MERITXELL ARJALAGUER



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# GEAR UP

*As its economy recovers, a new creative scene is forging Detroit's future, says local* MEGHAN McEWAN

DETROIT











**Clockwise from top left:** Coffee at Astro; the print shop at Salt & Cedar; the bar and (*below*) a dish at Gold Cash Gold in a former pawn shop; craft cocktail spot Sugar House

Once famed for motors and Motown, Detroit has in recent years gained a reputation for bankruptcy and urban decay. But look beyond the empty buildings and there is an alternate Detroit appearing – one buoyed by the creative energy of an art-and culture-fuelled renaissance. And in its wake, inventive restaurateurs are emerging to feed the hungry crowds who are coming back to the city.

One neighbourhood that's booming is **Corktown**, a previously near-deserted stretch of Michigan Avenue in the shadow of the abandoned Michigan Central Station. Now it's bustling with the likes of craft-ale specialist **Slows Bar B Q** (*entrées from AED 30; 001-313-962 9828, slowsbarbq.com*), coffee shop **Astro** (*coffee from AED 10; 001-313-808 0351, astrodetroit.com*) and Italian restaurant **Ottava Via** (*entrées from AED 40, 001-313-962 5500*). **Two James** (*001-313-964 4800, twojames.com*), the first distillery to open in Detroit since before Prohibition, sells a range of handcrafted spirits. Order the Corktown Flip at its industrial-style bar. **Gold Cash Gold** (*entrées from AED 50; 001-313 -242 0770, goldcashgolddetroit.com*), a restaurant that opened last December in a former pawn shop, shows how far the area is transforming.

Unique ventures are popping up across town, too. On the border of **Eastern Market,** the oldest outdoor farmers' market in America, Joel Peterson and Rebecca Mazzei added a café to **Trinosophes** (*001-313-737 6606, trinosophes.com*), their art and music venue, serving warm doughnuts, Vietnamese-inspired lunches and weekend brunch prepared by guest chefs. "We apply the same ethos to the food as we do to the music and art – we let whoever do whatever," says Mazzei.

A few doors down is artist Greg Holm's recently renovated Art Deco space, housing **Antietam** (*entrées from AED 70; 001-313-782 4378, antietamdetroit.com*). The menu is full of reimagined traditional dishes such as chilled melon soup and *entrecôte de beouf.* Check out **Craft Work** (*entrées from AED 50; 001-313-469 0976, craftworkdetroit.com*) in West Village and Midtown's **Selden Standard** (*entrées from AED 40; 001-313-438 5055, seldenstandard.com*). Detroit's favourite mixologist Dave Kwiatkowski, who brought the craft cocktail hotspot **Sugar House** (*001-313-962 0123, sugarhousedetroit.com)* to Corktown three years ago, also runs **Wright & Company** (*entrées from AED 50; 001-313- 962-7711, wrightdetroit.com*), a cocktail-focused downtown gastro-bistro.

Artists Megan O'Connell and Leon Johnson, who dish up home-cooked meals and monthly Book & Bread workshops in their print shop, **Salt & Cedar** (*set menu from AED 240; 001-313-932 0095, saltandcedar.com*), sum it up best. "We grew not from a business model but from curiosity and need," says Johnson. Where else can guests share a family-style dinner while learning to bind a hand-sewn, soft-cover journal? "This is a Detroit moment," he says. "It's all about extending the family table."

# Sometimes an experience is too good to put into words. Fortunately, one letter says it all.







M is the letter on everyone's lips in London's Shoreditch right now. M by Montcalm is the city's strikingly original new five star hotel. Beautifully designed and brimming with clever tech, this one-of-a-kind wonder symbolises the pioneering spirit of London. It's also a perfect fit for our portfolio of the world's most distinctive hotels.

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## Two homes, one pastry chef

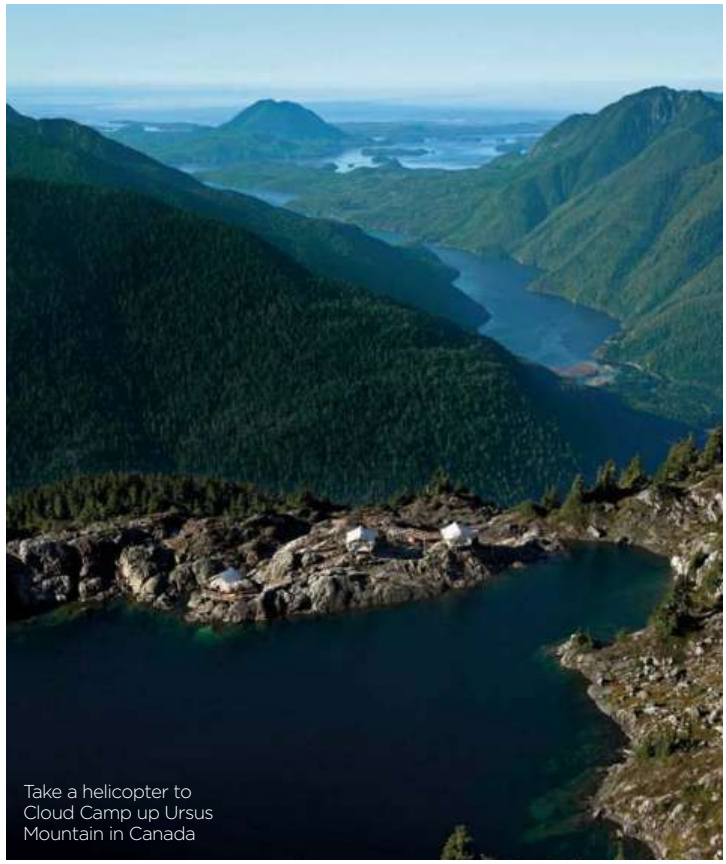
It's hard to believe that French-born Dominique Ansel – creator of the cronut – has only recently expanded his four-year-old SoHo bakery. In April, he opened Dominique Ansel Kitchen, a kind of experimental bakery with a focus on made-to-order mousse and savoury toast in New York's West Village. And last summer, he set up shop in Tokyo's Shibuya district, where lines form. Here, he gives us his one sheet on how to eat and drink your way through both these cities.

### TOKYO

**Best sake?**
"Sasagin Izakaya. It has a great selection and, thankfully, an English menu. I like its unfiltered sake best – the flavour is light and yeasty."
**Tastiest pastry?**
"Hidemi Sugino's mousse cake. There's always a line – get there early in the morning before he sells out."
**All the food rage?**
"Pancakes. Seriously. Go to Bills in Omotesando. They serve a fluffy, light ricotta pancake. People in Tokyo are crazy about it."
**Freshest sushi?**
"Tsukiji fish market. Sushi Dai is tiny and cramped but delicious."
**What you eat before leaving the city?**
"Ramen at Ichiran. It's the flavour I want to remember."

### NEW YORK

**Best cocktail spot?**
"Wallflower in the West Village. It's an intimate place. I order the carbonated Negroni. The co-owner used to be the head bartender at Daniel restaurant."
**Sweet treat?**
"I love the cookies at Levain Bakery. They have different varieties of chocolate chip – like peanut butter and walnut."
**Revelatory pizza?**
"The Brussels sprouts pizza with *fior di latte*, pecorino and smoked pancetta at Motorino is delicious."
**Don't leave the city without trying?**
"Katz's Deli. I also tell everyone that they can't leave New York without eating a hot dog from Gray's Papaya."



Take a helicopter to Cloud Camp up Ursus Mountain in Canada

## Upwardly mobile

*Intrepid new pitches are taking glamping to the outer limits*

For a night spent under canvas with no comfort spared, **Clayoquot Wilderness Resort** (*tents from AED 17,450 per person, three-night inclusive package; 001-250-266 0397, wildretreat.com*) on Vancouver Island has long been the smartest glamper's go-to. The experience is now raised to new heights, literally, bringing it 4,500ft above sea level to a remote cluster of tents up Ursus Mountain. Aptly named **Cloud Camp** (*from AED 7,860 per person, one-night inclusive package*) and accessible only by helicopter, this is the ultimate room with a view: wake up in a four-poster and see the mist rising from Clayoquot Sound, which weaves its inky path through the forested valleys below. It's just the latest in the trend for extreme sleep-outs. In Peru's Sacred Valley, **Skylodge Adventure Suites'** transparent pods cling to the side of Via Ferrata Mountain (*suites from AED 1,040; 0051- 95-137 3240, naturavive.com*). And in Wales, **Gaia Adventures** (*from AED 1,100 per person; 0044-781-441 2439, gaiaadventures.co.uk*) lets thrill-seekers spend the night on a portable ledge dangling from a cliff above the Irish Sea, but only after they've abseiled down to their bed first.

# Best foot forward

Designed to complement every globetrotter's wardrobe, the autumn/winter capsule shoe collection, Michael Kors Jet Set 6, includes boots, slip-on sneakers, platform pumps and sandals that will effortlessly **take your look from the streets of Paris to the Australian outback.**




Kyle Slip-on Sneaker, AED 690, **Michael Kors**

WORDS: KATHLEEN SQUIRES, FIONA KERR, JENNY JOHNSON; PHOTO: JOSH LEWIS

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# MASTERS OF CEREMONY

## A cup of tea isn't merely a drink: it's the history of the world itself, says *HANYA YANAGIHARA*

*Photographed by* **ANNA WILLIAMS**
*Prop styling by* **AMY WILSON**



Before steel, before oil, before cars or guns or Coca-Cola, there was tea – one of civilisation's first truly global commodities as well as one of its most enduring and beloved. The idea of drinking tea is credited (as are so many other good things in life) to the Chinese, who are said to have discovered the curative and soothing effects of steeping leaves in hot water in 2737 BC. And although the practice quickly travelled throughout the Near and Far East via the Silk Road, it didn't reach the West until relatively late – probably the 16th century or so, when the Portuguese and the Dutch (and later the English) began establishing strongholds in Asia. But once introduced, it flourished: The English in particular went mad for tea, and today, even though their empire is long gone, an affinity for the drink remains in every country they once colonised – evidence of occupation served hot, in a cup. Indeed, to have a cup of tea means that you're yet another participant in a millennia-long tradition, one often freighted with significance far beyond simple enjoyment. In 16th-century Japan, for example, teahouses were constructed with very tiny doors that could be entered only on your hands and knees and which necessitated leaving your sword outside: a way for both parties to ensure their mutual humility, and a promise to each other that theirs would be a meeting of civility, not of potential violence. And although we (rightly) consider chai India's national drink, it didn't become truly ubiquitous until the Fifties, when the India Tea Board (which owed its very existence to the British) began a campaign to popularise the beverage. In fact, it wouldn't be overstating the case to say that tea tells the history of the world: how different people travelled from continent to continent, bringing with them their own customs; how those customs were adapted and transformed.

In this portfolio, we pay tribute to our favourite tea rituals, from the pomp of English teatime to the subtle elegance of the Japanese tea ceremony. Offering insight into each tradition is tea resource Heidi Johannsen Stewart who, with her two partners, is a co-founder of the beloved Brooklyn-based tea company Bellocq. So little in life is universal and yet the simple pleasure of drinking a cup of tea (or a glass if you're in the Middle East) might just be the single experience that unites virtually all cultures on earth.▸

Tea has been a way to map travel since 2737 BC





# THE BRITISH ISLES

They may not have discovered it but no one (save the Chinese) loves tea more than the British. The United Kingdom's two greatest contributions to tea are in fact relatively recent ones. The first, Earl Grey – a blend of black tea given a distinctive floral note from bergamot oil – was invented for the 2nd Earl Grey in the 1830s. The second, teatime – a light meal usually served at around 4pm and not to be confused with high tea, which occurs between 5 and 7pm and includes a hot dish – is generally attributed to Anna Russell, Duchess of Bedford, circa 1841. Two centuries later, they've become as indelibly associated with Great Britain as the Queen – a tea drinker herself. Of course.



Rajasthani earrings, Durga strawflower pendant and ring; all by **PRITI**
Porcelain tumblers, spoon; all by **Suzanne Sullivan**

# INDIA

If hot pink is India's signature colour then the scent of chai might be its signature fragrance. Every block in every town has its own chai wallah who makes his proprietary version of chai, a black tea – usually Assam – slow-brewed with milk; sweetened with sugar, honey or jaggery; and spiced with cinnamon, ginger, star anise, fennel, peppercorn, nutmeg and cloves. "In India, they boil it down quite a bit so it's very rich and creamy," Stewart says. "When I make it at home, I also add a slice of fresh ginger: Its freshness gives the tea extra nuance and heightens its warmth and sensuality."



# MOROCCO

Anyone who's been to Morocco knows that there, a greeting is never a greeting without a glass of steaming-hot mint tea, served in one of two ways: sweet or very sweet. "The preparation is traditionally done by the eldest male of the household," says Stewart. "The tea itself is a combination of Chinese gunpowder green tea and lots of dried or fresh mint, with sugar to taste." Her favourite part of the ritual is the actual pour: "It's served from standing height into the glass below," she says. "It's a beautiful, elaborate gesture, but it also aerates the tea, making it more flavourful and releasing its aroma throughout the room."



# JAPAN

Perhaps no culture on earth loves rituals as much as the Japanese do – the arrival of the full moon, the budding of spring's first blossoms and the changing of the leaves from green to gold – are cause for celebration and memorialisation. So it's little wonder that the drinking of a cup of tea should be treated with similar formality and elegance. "The tea ceremony was initially an elite pursuit, one that provided a forum for the rulers of ancient Japan to forge social ties," Stewart says. "And even now, everything is always carefully considered: the type of drinking vessel, the palette, the season. There's a sense of harmony achieved from the balance of bitter and sweet." But beyond a perfect aesthetic experience, the tea ceremony is something more precious still: a moment out of time, when everything slows and the only thing to concentrate on is the bitter taste of the frothy green tea on your tongue. CNT

Condé Nast Traveller
MIDDLE EAST

# Where to stay

FOODIE HOTELS ■ MATTHEW WILLIAMSON ■ PHILADELPHIA



Escape to the country at this charming Scottish retreat

WORDS: CALDER QUINN, JOHN WOGAN; SAJAN KURIAKOS; PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES, GENTL & HYERS, PHILIPPE SHAFF/COURTESY DON ALFONSO 1890



# TABLE TO BED

*These days, we romanticise the European country stay as much for the charm of vintage floral wallpaper and ironed linens as we do for the unforgettable meal. Here are three properties that get both just right*

## THREE CHIMNEYS
### Isle of Skye, Scotland

The six-hour drive from Glasgow to Colbost – on the rugged, verdant northern shore of Scotland's Isle of Skye – may seem daunting, but anyone who's visited Three Chimneys knows it's well worth the effort for chef Scott Davies' take on traditional Scottish cuisine. The abundant larder comprises juicy langoustines, scallops and oysters. The seafood stars in dishes like the standout Colbost Skink, a pine-smoke-infused stew of smoked haddock, black pudding crumble and golden-yellow egg yolk finished with a splash of Talisker. Like everything on the menu, the six-room inn next door is an experience that can only be had in the Highlands, with every room looking out over Loch Dunvegan and the mountain peaks beyond.

**DON'T MISS** Loch Dunvegan is home to seals, whales and dolphins, and the hotel can arrange boat tours to see them up close.
**BRING BACK** Isle of Skye Sea Salt, harvested from the pristine Loch Snizort – stop by a local store for a canister.

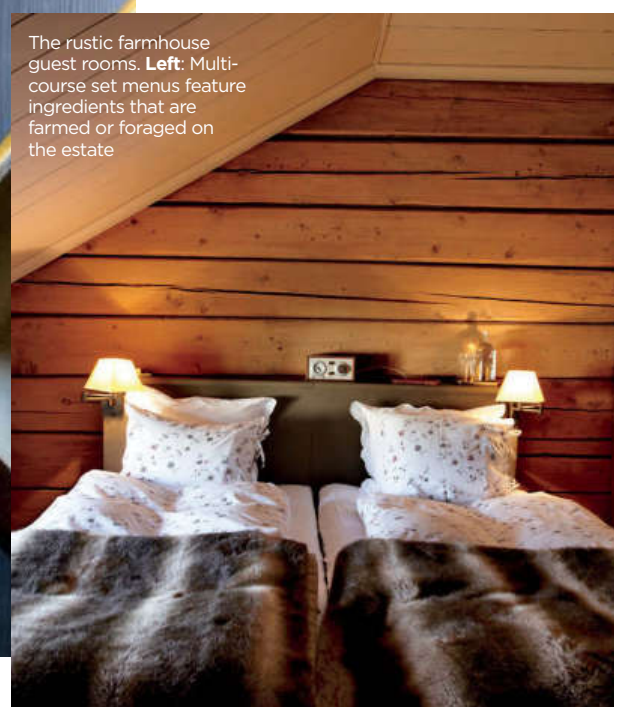
*Set menus from AED 215; doubles from AED 2,000; 0044-147-051 1258, threechimneys.co.uk*

# FÄVIKEN
## Järpen, Sweden

The meteoric rise of New Nordic cuisine has inspired a wave of epicurean pilgrimages to Copenhagen and Stockholm, but the most remarkable Scandinavian culinary experience may be on a remote 22,000-acre farm hundreds of kilometres north of the Swedish capital. It's from this forested landscape, populated with chickens, goats and lambs, and from the surrounding vegetation that chef Magnus Nilsson sources and creates all of his wildly unusual – though deceptively simple – dishes. In summer, as part of Fäviken's highly seasonal 20-course tasting menu, a typical dish might include poached trout topped with a scattering of just-picked edible wildflowers, whereas roasted bone marrow (Nilsson saws the bone open in front of you before scooping out the goods) with raw diced moose heart and sage salt is a signature winter offering. And when you're ready for bed, it's just a few steps to one of the five rooms in the 1745 farmhouse, where you can sleep off the grilled quail poached in mead before starting again in the morning with a full breakfast of porridge with cloudberry compote and blackcurrant juice.

**DON'T MISS** In winter, hit the slopes in Åre, Sweden's premier ski destination, about 30 minutes west of Fäviken.
**BRING BACK** A jar of Kalixlöjrom whitefish roe, a Swedish delicacy, to spread on Wasabröd crisp rye bread.

*Tasting menu from AED 975; doubles from AED 1,100; 0046-6474 0177, faviken.com*



The rustic farmhouse guest rooms. **Left**: Multi-course set menus feature ingredients that are farmed or foraged on the estate



The signature pink interiors of Ristorante Don Alfonso 1890

# DON ALFONSO 1890

## Sant'Agata sui Due Golfi, Italy

For owner Alfonso Iaccarino, Don Alfonso 1890 – a rose-coloured, eight-room former villa on Italy's Sorrentine Peninsula, just a few kilometres from Positano and Amalfi – is a family affair. The third-generation hotelier, who runs the property with his wife, Livia, and their two sons, is also the Michelin-starred chef at the hotel's restaurant. Every bit of produce on Don Alfonso's Mediterranean menu comes from his nearby 17-acre organic farm, where olive and lemon trees grow alongside the vegetables and herbs that inform the seafood-focused menu. (Guests can also try their hand at cooking with the home-grown ingredients.) Book one of the cheerful rooms – all in shades of the building's signature pink – and you'll be right in the centre of one of Italy's most picturesque coastal regions.

**DON'T MISS** A ride to Capri on a *gozzo* (a classic canopied wooden boat), which you can book through the hotel.
**BRING BACK** A bottle of Le Peracciole Liquore di Limone, a lemon liqueur made with fruit from Don Alfonso's organic farm.

*Entrées from AED 155; doubles from AED 1,200; 0039-08-1878 0026, donalfonso.com* **CNT**



L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon serves Japanese-inspired dishes by the Michelin-starred chef

# CULINARY *voyage*

## Discover the vibrant dining and nightlife destination of Singapore

Featuring a diverse landscape of culinary hotspots spearheaded by top chefs, Singapore's dining scene is the gateway to world-class gastronomy in Southeast Asia.

Connoisseurs of haute cuisine can indulge in an array of premier restaurants established by world-renowned chefs. Savour the culinary expertise of Michelin-starred chef Joël Robuchon at his restaurant L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon, which features opulent red and black interiors designed by Pierre-Yves Rochon and an à la carte menu of Japanese-inspired dishes cooked in an open kitchen. For a taste of exquisite French cuisine with an Asian twist, award-winning Restaurant André is often hailed as one of the premier restaurants in the city. Enjoy specialities such as the foie gras jelly with black truffle coulis created by Taiwanese chef André Chiang. The French nouvelle cuisine is served in eight exceptional courses paired with the finest biodynamic grape selection. British Michelin-starred chef Jason Atherton's Esquina, situated in a hip enclave of Chinatown, serves tapas such as the saffron paella, pan-fried red snapper, chorizo and snow peas in an industrial-chic setting along with Spanish cocktails and hops.



A bar with a view at Marina Bay Sands' Cé La Vie



*Petits fours* at award-winning Restaurant André

Experience the vibrant nightlife scene at the city's rooftop bars such as 1-Altitude, boasting panoramic views from the tallest building in Singapore. Perched at the top of the Marina Bay Sands resort is Cé La Vi, comprised of three integrated venues offering an observation deck, banquette dining area, lounge and infinity pool with bespoke cocktails created by the in-house mixologists.

Finish the night at indulgent dessert destination 2am:dessertbar by Janice Wong, crowned Asia's best pastry chef by San Pellegrino Asia's 50 Best Restaurants. Delectable treats include the signature 2am: Fonffle – a chocolate fondant waffle and orange sorbet. It's the perfect ending to a day in Asia's gastronomic paradise.

*For more information visit yoursingapore.com*



Roasted duck breast at Michelin-starred chef Jason Atherton's Esquina

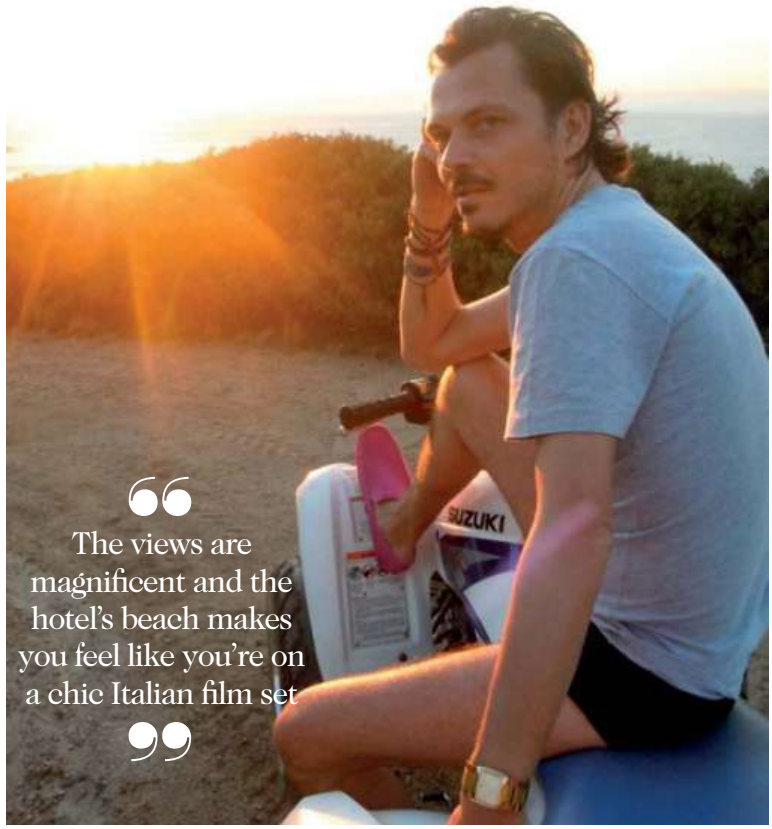
# BED-HOPPING WITH...
# Matthew Williamson

*The colourful fashion and accessories designer on his top stylish stays*




## CAVO TAGOO

"This is one of the places to be seen in Mykonos, if that's your thing. A constant buzz of jet-setters coming and going will keep you entertained through the day and well into the night. The outdoor restaurants are laid-back and fun, and as the sun drops the party atmosphere rises as the infinity pool gets a neon makeover and the night owls come out to play."
*Doubles from AED 1,520; 0030-228-902 0100, cavotagoo.gr*




"The views are magnificent and the hotel's beach makes you feel like you're on a chic Italian film set"

INTERVIEW: JENNY JOHNSON

## BELMOND LA RESIDENCIA




"Discreetly nestled in the hillside of Deià, this is a first-class, super-chic hotel. Pre- or post-dinner cocktails on the terrace are a must, with views out to the village and the golden-lit church up on a nearby hill. An exquisite hotel in a magical setting."
*Doubles from AED 3,415; 0034-971-63 9011, belmond.com*

## LIME WOOD

"A luxury country retreat not far from London. Set on acres of lush pine forest, Lime Wood is the perfect respite from city life, offering a five-star sanctuary and the chance to get back to basics and be at one with nature."
*Doubles from AED 1,870; 0044-23-8028 7177, limewoodhotel.co.uk*







## KURÀ DESIGN VILLAS

"This boutique hotel within a jungle canopy is one of a kind. It's clearly been a labour of love for the owners who built it. From the organic, environmentally conscious elements to the locally hired and well-trained staff, no detail has been overlooked."
*Villas from AED 2,280; 00506-8521 3407, kuracostarica.com*




## IL SAN PIETRO DI POSITANO

"The most charming five-star retreat done in proper old-school style. The views are magnificent and the hotel's beach makes you feel like you're on a chic Italian film set."
*Doubles from AED 2,660; 0039-089-81 2080, ilsanpietro.it*

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"I prefer smaller, independently owned and run hotels rather than massive chains."

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# PHILADELPHIA

*It's easy to fall for the City of Brotherly Love*

**ONE TO WATCH**

Situated on the pretty Champs Élysées-inspired Benjamin Franklin Parkway, **The Logan Philadelphia**, a Curio Collection by Hilton hotel, is slated to **open in December** with rooms decked out in **local artwork**. More art can be found outside, with the fascinating Barnes Foundation and expansive **Philadelphia Museum of Art within view**.

*curiocollection.com*



**CONTEMPORARY**



**BUSINESS**

| | SOFITEL PHILADELPHIA | HYATT AT THE BELLEVUE |
|---|---|---|
| **Location** | Steps away from refined Rittenhouse Square and Walnut Street, a **designer shopping boulevard that's home to Barney's** and local boutiques such as Knit Wit | Inside The Bellevue **on the Avenue of the Arts** (South Broad Street). It's in the heart of the city, near the Academy of Music |
| **Décor** | Geometric patterns follow **the minimalistic Shaker design philosophy**, making for an interesting urban look without being overwhelming. The lobby floor is made from seven types of stone | Imagined in French Renaissance style, the hotel reflects the **old-world sophisticate theme** with ornate wallpaper accents and plush carpeting |
| **Clientele** | **Stylish travellers** looking for a base that matches their modish wardrobe and is convenient for shopping, dining and cultural fixes | **Discerning businesspeople** who want an elegant retreat; theatre-goers on the way to the next show |
| **Rooms** | The 306 rooms and 67 suites are **dark and sultry, lending them an air of mystery and romance**. Studded accents recall vintage luggage | **A spacious work desk and comfortable seating** in rooms done up in a soft colour palette with flashes of jewel tones and pretty floral wallpaper; guest rooms on the upper floors enjoy sprawling vistas of the city |
| **Food & Drink** | French-inspired **Liberté Urban Lounge is a popular brunch spot** with views of the action-filled street outside and a menu of succulent seafood dishes | Top-floor XIX is a highlight not only of the hotel but the city. Stylish guests dine on **New American cuisine, like Pennsylvania lake trout**, beneath ornate domed ceilings and enormous windows with city views |
| **Strengths** | Returning to the brand's **feather-top SoBed is a plush treat** after a day of exploring. They're available to purchase if your bed at home doesn't match up | **A 24-hour Executive Express Business Center** offers shipping, packaging, office equipment and rentals; ample meeting space makes it the ideal location for functions |
| **Weaknesses** | Rooms next to the gym can be noisy; some rooms overlook the **construction on a neighbouring building** | **Noise sometimes carries from busy Broad Street** to the rooms above (reduced by the earplugs in the bedside table) |
| **Wi-Fi** | **Free** | **Free** |
| **Price** | Doubles from **AED 705** | Doubles from **AED 735** |
| **Contact** | 120 South 17th Street; 001-215-569 8300, **sofitel.com** | 200 South Broad Street; 001-215-893 1234, **philadelphia.bellevue.hyatt.com** |

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## BOUTIQUE

### THE INDEPENDENT

In Midtown Village, guests are **within walking distance of nightlife, dining and coffee spots**; nestled between Center City's business district and the historic Old City

Like a chic city condo, **funky furnishings and locally inspired artwork** pepper comfortable spaces, such as the lobby's soaring painting of City Hall



Young, **hip couples and solo travellers** looking for a fun hideaway

An intimate 24 homey rooms feature unique design elements like **cathedral ceilings, fireplaces or French walls**; rooms are spacious with large wooden dressers and windows that flood the room with light

**Italian-American Little Nonna's** sources ingredients from the Philadelphia Italian Market; buzzing Restaurant Row on 13th Street is nearby

**The central location makes it an ideal base**; although there is no fitness centre, complimentary access to the 12th Street Gym, less than a block away, is included

Rooms on the small lobby level are **subjected to the activity of guests coming and going** around the clock

**Free**

Doubles from **AED 685**

1234 Locust Street; 001-215-772 1440, **theindependenthotel.com**



## ICONIC

### LOEWS PHILADELPHIA HOTEL

Occupying the Thirties-era PSFS Building, the nation's first skyscraper and a National Historic Landmark, it's **in Center City, across from the state's convention centre**

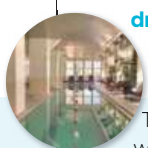
Slate grey and splashes of red dominate the ***Metropolis*-inspired design** that would look just as at home in Gotham or New York City's Midtown



Visitors in town for events at the Pennsylvania Convention Center and **urbanites on a weekend getaway**

Crisp white linens and bright red upholstery in the 581 guest rooms and suites that are spacious, modern and, on the upper floors, boast **impressive views of the surrounding skyscrapers**

Bank & Bourbon serves seasonal American cuisine alongside a **buzzy bar that draws the post-work and convention crowd**



The 12 Fit Spa & Gym is enormous with **a 20m pool, a wide menu of spa treatments** and state-of-the-art fitness equipment

**Bathrooms in the non-suite rooms feel a bit dated**, with cramped bathtub-shower combos

**Free**

Doubles from **AED 1,210**

1200 Market Street; 001-215-627 1200, **loewshotels.com/philadelphia-hotel**



## DESIGN

### HOTEL MONACO PHILADELPHIA



**Right in Independence National Historic Park** – where the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall can be found

A heaped helping of **quirk in cotton-candy colours, with oversized fabric and wallpaper prints** mixed with vintage-inspired regal fireplaces, large armoires and even a crystal pirate ship chandelier

**Families on an educational or history-focused holiday** looking to be based in the heart of America's birthplace

Bright spaces kitted out in wallpaper with **giant peacock illustrations, sky-blue curtains and touches of animal print** like in the zebra-print duvet cover and plush leopard bathrobes

The ground-floor **Red Owl Tavern has exceptional charcuterie and cheese boards**; Stratus Rooftop Lounge is one of Old City's chicest spots for sundowners with a view

Views from the rooms – particularly those in the south-west corner – are unbeatable, **overlooking some of America's most important sites**, like Independence Hall

Its location in the historic district means you're **surrounded by crowds of gawping tour groups** as you leave the hotel

**Free**

Doubles from **AED 690**

433 Chestnut Street; 001-215-925 2111, **monaco-philadelphia.com**

PHOTOS: ALAMY, CORBIS



# *Arabian* OPULENCE

The main dining area on the lower level of Qbara

Experience modern Arabesque cuisine at Dubai's authentic dining and entertainment destination Qbara

A contemporary lifestyle restaurant, lounge and bar, Qbara Dubai embraces Middle Eastern cuisines and culture. Meaning large and generous in Arabic, Qbara is a contemporary fine dining eatery in Wafi City, adjacent to Raffles Dubai.

The venue's extravagant interiors were conceived by award-winning Japanese interior design firm Studio Glitt, creating an exquisite vernacular of traditional Middle Eastern elements combined with an ultra-modern design philosophy. The property is spread over two floors with a cosy restaurant set on the ground floor and a lounge seating area on a multi-level balcony. The venue's central architectural feature is a carved panel wall comprising of a patchwork of authentic Islamic timber carvings.

The menu features dishes inspired by Levantine, Middle Eastern and Moroccan gastronomy with a focus on premium and fresh ingredients, the use of indigenous spices, contemporary cooking methods and immaculate presentation. Savour specialities such as the *sayadieh* of black cod with garlic, onion and spices and the sweet milk *bastilla* with strawberries

Guests can experience diverse musical entertainment from the resident international DJ Ivan Minuti from Mondays through Fridays joined by various musicians including the Mozaik Trio offering a composition of Latin and Oriental music on Wednesdays; jazz music from saxophonist Adam Long every Thursday; Pasha Cazan, the violinist dazzling diners with her virtuoso performances every Friday; and DJ Mary G on the turntables every Saturday and Sunday.

*For more information call 00971-4 -709 2500 or visit qbara.ae*



The timber-carved wall is a focal point of the restaurant



Sweet milk *bastilla* with strawberries. **Right**: *Sayadieh* of black cod with garlic, onion and spices



# RAISING THE BAR

*Is the mini bar a fading relic of the hotel industry's past?*
*RHEA SARAN finds that the answer isn't as clear as it may seem*



*Illustrated by* BESS HARDING




THE MINI BAR IS DEAD, LONG live the mini bar!

For the past couple of years, industry insiders have been debating, predicting and disagreeing on the future of that contentious hotel amenity, the mini bar. Many have sounded the death knell, citing findings like TripAdvisor's 2013 survey in which the mini bar ranked among the lowest priorities when it comes to what travellers want from a hotel. While free Wi-Fi was crucial to 89 per cent of those polled and free breakfast to 84 per cent, the mini bar came in at 21 per cent, way under other low scoring services like laundry and beauty treatments. With the proliferation of convenience stores with competitive pricing and 24-hour room service, some say it has simply lost relevance.

Things have come a long way since 1974, the year the mini bar made its first appearance, when the Hilton Hong Kong installed small fridges in all its guest rooms leading to a whopping 500 per cent increase in beverage sales. Now, the Hilton group is among those – including Marriott and Starwood – who are looking at phasing out the mini bar in certain properties and markets. In-room drinks sales clearly aren't what they used to be. Besides which, the daily inventory of the bar and the disputes that can arise with guests over consumption add cost in terms of both time and money.

And yet, despite eulogies being written, the mini bar is still very much in existence. There's even been a spate of hotels who've accepted the challenge, using it as a reason to up their game. At the EDITION hotels, for instance, VP of brand experience Ben Pundole feels that mini bars continue to be important in luxury hotels because they are "carefully curated micro retail spaces that project the image of the property and the brand". Plus, designing the bar's contents to match the location – and using local products – can be fun. "Each EDITION property partners with a local brewery to create local hops," says Pundole. "London is Crafty Lager with Freedom brewery, Miami is Tropicale with the Miami Brewing Co. and New York is Magic Owl with Alphabet City Brewing Co. In London we have pork scratchings and Maltesers, which are very British, and in Miami we have pineapple soda, coconut chips and sunglasses that are a limited-edition collaboration with Illesteva." The offerings have been made so enticing that one time, according to Pundole, a couple staying at the Miami property decided to live off only what was provided in their room for 24 hours, which meant donning bathrobes, eating and drinking the in-room treats, and wearing underwear and sunglasses from the mini bar.






A couple decided to live off only what was provided in their room for 24 hours, eating and drinking the in-room treats, and wearing underwear and sunglasses from the mini bar




The idea that making the in-room offerings fun, thoughtful and relevant could lead to increased consumption isn't limited to the EDITION. In Australia, boutique property QT Sydney includes playing cards, a domino set, an emergency bow tie and a beard trimming kit among its more innovative items. At Alila Villas Uluwatu in Bali, guests pick a mini bar package ahead of arrival to suit their tastes. The Gourmet set-up includes blinis, caviar, smoked salmon, duck foie gras and Iberico ham that can be washed down with a bottle of bubbly, while opting for the Healthy package means the room is stocked with organic popcorn, cucumber and mint yoghurt, unsalted nuts, dried fruit and granola as well as fresh juices and water. The recently opened Baccarat Hotel New York not only fills its mini bar with Fauchon treats (mini-crêpes, almond thins, hearts biscuits, to name a few), there's a section of *le bar* that provides non-alcoholic drinks for free. No paying $5 for a Coke or a bottle of Evian here. The concept of the free mini bar has wide appeal in Asia: The Swire group's modern Upper House in Hong Kong stocks its "maxi bar" with plenty of soft drinks and juices, snacks and hops, all of which can be enjoyed *gratis*. And at the Siam Kempinski Hotel Bangkok, the snacks are paid for but local hops, water and some soft drinks are offered complimentary and replenished daily.

The continued relevance of an in-room bar does also vary, to some degree, by geography and what guests are used to in a particular part of the world. Some markets tend toward price-sensitivity, others are more focused on convenience no matter the cost. Says Markus Roeder, senior director of operations Middle East & Africa for Marriott International and The Ritz-Carlton, "We see that our customers are still demanding a mini bar – the convenience of having snacks and drinks available in-room is attractive to our guests." This is particularly true, he explains, because even business travellers are often accompanied by their families, making comfort and 24-hour amenities particularly important. So what exactly is it that people are demanding be available? According to Roeder, guests in this region lean toward the most recognisable of mini bar items: juices, soft drinks, water, nuts, potato chips and chocolate. Though there's a growing movement here, too, to introduce a little something extra. "Trends originating in the restaurant and bar scene are becoming part of the mini bar offerings," he says. "Curated, bespoke and local are key directions – quality, artisanal products, ranging from micro brews to organic juices and crafted cocktails." As for localisation, dates and camel milk chocolates bring a taste of the Middle East into the bar.

For now it seems the critics and pundits will have to continue the debate, because the future of the mini bar appears far from decided. Says the EDITION's Pundole, "People will always be social in a lifestyle hotel, especially with world-class restaurants, bars and clubs – but sometimes there's nothing more indulgent than staying in with your partner, watching a movie and eating in." CNT



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MIDDLE EAST

# Travel in style

STYLE GUIDE ■ HOW TO PACK ■ AYAH TABARI




Vintage fashion and accesories on display at LILY et Cie



# VINTAGE STORES IN LOS ANGELES

*YVONNE HOU* reveals where to find timeless treasures in Hollywood's backyard

*Photographed by* **PATRICK MAUS**

HAIR & MAKEUP: JENI CHUA; ASSISTANT PHOTOGRAPHER: ALEXANDER FENYVES

## LILY ET CIE

A pioneer among vintage stores, LILY et Cie houses the world's largest collection of clothing from the 20th century. As early as 1992, Hollywood actor Demi Moore wore an evening gown from this store on the red carpet, making vintage clothing a trend among celebrities. The collection here includes pieces by Vionnet, Jean Patou, Madame Grès, Chanel, Balenciaga, Valentino, Christian Lacroix and Jean Paul Gaultier, many of which have come from celebrities' private closets.

*Dresses from AED 7,350; 001-310-724 5757, lilyetcie.com*



Katy Rodriguez, one of the owners of Resurrection



The interior of American Rag Cie



Cameron Silver at his store, Decades

## DECADES

Former singer Cameron Silver founded this store in 1997, with a focus on exclusive evening wear from the 20th and 21st centuries. Silver is closely connected to Hollywood stars and stylists: Julia Roberts wore a Valentino vintage dress from Decades for the 2001 Oscars and, in the same year, Nicole Kidman selected a Loris Azzaro piece for the premiere of her movie *Moulin Rouge*. Named one of fashion's 25 most influential people by *TIME*, Silver is exceptionally persuasive at dissolving his customers' negative prejudices toward second-hand clothing.
*Dresses from AED 1,840; 001-323-655 1960, decadesinc.com*

## THE WAY WE WORE

Owner Doris Raymond first started collecting vintage items merely as a hobby, but it eventually became her career. The first floor of the store stocks clothes from the 20th century, including swimsuits from the Fifties, gorgeous printed silk-chiffon dresses from the Thirties and accessories, including bags, shoes and hats displayed in the cupboards. On the second floor, you'll find the more exclusive range of apparel as well as women's shoes, among them a large number of French handmade, pearl-embroidered dresses from the Twenties, and pieces by Yves Saint Laurent, Chanel, Alaïa, Bill Blass and many others.
*Dresses from AED 1,290; 001-323-937 0878, thewaywewore.com*

## AMERICAN RAG CIE

This lifestyle shop stocks vintage clothes sourced from all over the world, as well as emerging design brands, creating an interesting amalgamation of old and new. Half the store sells vintage clothing with a classic American aesthetic and the other half sells new clothing with a nostalgic touch. It has a great menswear section, with brands like Comme des Garçons and Levi's, Hawaiian shirts and rock-themed T-shirts. The store also retails high-end designer jeans.
*Denim from AED 510; 001-323-935 3154, americanrag.com*

## RESURRECTION

Located on posh Melrose Avenue, this is the Los Angeles branch of an artistic vintage boutique from New York City. Apart from the fact that it speaks to the popularity of vintage clothing in recent times, Resurrection was named so because the original store



The What Goes Around Comes Around store. **Right**: Jewellery and Chanel at Resurrection





The shoe display at The Way We Wore. **Below left**: Accessories and books at American Rag Cie



was built in place of a funeral parlour. Keeping in mind the Hollywood influence, the clothing here is more glam than the NYC collection, with bohemian touches. It has now turned into a hotspot for local fashion editors and star stylists.
*Dresses from AED 1,655; 001-323-651 5516, resurrectionvintage.com*

### WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND (WGACA)

An outpost of the famous shop in SoHo, New York, WGACA is located on La Brea Avenue. The range includes men's and women's clothing, old stereos and past editions of magazines, records and vintage books. Apart from the vast collection of jewellery by Chanel, look out for vintage shirts from the Victorian era, which are true masterpieces.
*Shirts from AED 595; 001-323-933-0250, whatgoesaroundnyc.com* CNT



A dress on display at What Goes Around Comes Around

## TIPS FOR BUYING VINTAGE

- Do your research beforehand and learn how to tell the condition of your purchase. Ask shop owners for recommendations for brands and time periods.
- Feel the garment you're about to buy. A fabric that holds its colour and has a tight knit is likely to last. Remember that synthetic fabric was actually expensive back in the day, so don't make the mistake of immediately dismissing those pieces.
- Check for stains, tears, missing buttons and broken zippers as well as damage to the underarm area (hold garments up in the light to spot these). Try to find something that you like as-is and don't have to repair significantly; a few tailoring alterations are normal. For accessories, check shoes for missing heel tips and the buckles and straps of handbags for wear-and-tear.
- Sizes have altered greatly through the ages, so know your measurements and always try before you buy. It's handy to keep a measuring tape on you in case trials aren't allowed.
- A few things that denote a garment was made before the Sixties: metal zippers, side-snap closures, saw-toothed edges and union labels printed in blue.
- Store your purchases in tissue paper or soft cloth (not plastic bags) and keep a dehumidifier in the wardrobe for minimal damage.

WORDS: JASREEN MAYAL KHANNA






The geodesic dome references the set for the A/W 15-16 Paris show. **Left:** A view of the Strand, London





This room recreates the feel of being front row in Paris at the show. **Above**: The artisan video desks showcase the brand's commitment to *savoir-faire*

# THE SHOW MUST GO ON

*Louis Vuitton's immersive multimedia fashion exhibit travels to London this month*

Enter the glass doors of 180 Strand in central London this month and prepare to step back through space and time, to Paris circa March. It's like stumbling upon the most fashionable of wormholes, one that transports you to the futuristic environs of the Fondation Louis Vuitton in the Bois de Boulogne, where earlier this year reflective glass domes were erected for the presentation of Louis Vuitton's autumn/winter 2015-16 women's collection during Paris Fashion Week. Here, at 180 Strand, rounding the first corner brings you to a high-ceilinged room, the centrepiece of which is a geodesic dome harking back to that show. All around, in surround sound, the dulcet tones of French actress Adèle Exarchopoulos takes you through the process that led Nicolas Ghesquière to his third ready-to-wear collection for the *maison*.

In fact, Series 3 – Louis Vuitton's latest installment of a travelling multimedia fashion exhibition that gives the public in different countries access to each season's show – is really a journey into the mind of Ghesquière. Navigate a tunnel from the dome and you'll end up at

WORDS: RHEA SARAN; PHOTOS: ALAMY







**From top:** The entrance to the exhibit; the walk-in wardrobe displaying key looks; the trunk at the end of the tunnel containing Ghesquière's inspirations

SERIES 2
ROME





An artisan demonstrates the making of a Petite Malle in Rome. **Above**: Series 2 took place at Palazzo Ruspoli on via del Corso

SERIES 1
SHANGHAI



The poster room at the exhibition in Shanghai, China

a giant trunk containing the artistic director's inspirations, presented as a flickering mood board, which stretch back to the very origins of the brand as trunk makers in 1854 France. The room appears to spin from the sheer volume of history, depicted on screens along the walls, taking you from the establishment of the workshop in Asnières in 1859 through the many incarnations of the LV logo over time, until you land back in March 2015 with video sound bytes from the models who walked the show sharing how they felt stepping on to the runway.

Trunk making will always be an essential part of Louis Vuitton's DNA. And as travel and fashion have evolved so has the interpretation of this most classic of luggage pieces. In his first collection for Louis Vuitton last year, Ghesquière introduced the now-iconic Petite Malle. At Series 3, among many other highlights, visitors can watch as two artisans live-demo the *savoir-faire* behind the creation of these mini trunk bags, with each stitch and element showcased in vivid detail.

Before Series 3, there were Series 1 and 2. The first of these took place in the Far East, in Shanghai and Tokyo, offering a glimpse into Ghesquière's process leading to his debut collection; it traced his journey both into history, to the roots of the brand, and into the future, which is the direction in which he is now taking the house. Series 2 focused on the journey of the spring/summer 2015 collection and travelled from Los Angeles to the Palazzo Ruspoli in Rome. Bringing Series 3 to London this autumn – with the launch during London Fashion Week – is particularly symbolic for the *maison* because it was in this city that the first non-Parisian store opened, in 1885. CNT

*Series 3 opened to the public on September 21 and will continue till October 18, with free admission and the opportunity to do a guided tour*

# PRECIOUS CARGO

*Sometimes a single bag won't do the trick. These speciality carriers will ensure your belongings arrive damage-free*



WORDS: RHEA SARAN; STYLE: DINA KENJEBAEVA; PHOTO: VLAD ANTONOV




1 Nylon garment cover, AED 1,315, **Tumi**
2 Leather and cotton garment bag, AED 13,050, **Brunello Cucinelli**
3 Leather garment cover, price on request, **Etro**
4 Leather garment cover, AED 8,050, **Louis Vuitton**
5 Leather hat box, AED 11,650, **Prada**
6 Leather backpack, AED 9,185, **Brunello Cucinelli**
7 Cosmolite M suitcase, AED 2,380, **Samsonite**

# OUT OF THIS WORLD

*Stargaze wherever you are with celestial watches featuring astronomical complications, constellation displays and hues of midnight blue*

**1** Lady Arpels Zodiac Libra Watch, AED 504,000, **Van Cleef & Arpels**
**2** Portugieser Sidérale Scafusia, from AED 2,760,000, **IWC Schaffhausen**
**3** Midnight Diamond Drops 39mm, AED 113,100, **Harry Winston** at Rivoli
**4** Rendez-Vous Celestial, AED 208,000, **Jaeger-LeCoultre**
**5** Reine De Naples Jour/Nuit 8999, AED 824,600, **Breguet** at Rivoli

WORDS: JENNY JOHNSON; STYLE: SABINA PARKINSON; PHOTO: EFRAIM EVIDOR




3

4

5

AL MAHA
A LUXURY COLLECTION
DESERT RESORT & SPA

*Dubai*

# Al Diwaan – A Gastronomic Journey at Al Maha, A Luxury Collection Desert Resort & Spa

Al Diwaan has a dual meaning in Arabic & Persian – it can mean a 'Chamber' or 'a collection of poems'. Al Diwaan is also Al Maha's dining venue – definitely a chamber where poets will feel inspired to write poetry. Arabesque-inspired interiors, give this restaurant a warm and cozy feel and the open-air terrace offers stunning views of the vast expanse of the desert.

The cuisine in Al Maha is of a refined repertoire offering eclectic timeless classics curated to satisfy the palate of the resort's international clientele.
Breakfast at Al Diwaan is definitely fit for a King – eggs of your choice, be it Eggs Benedict or Poached Organic Eggs with Turkey Ham & Hollandaise sauce. Those frequenting Al Maha opt for the Al Maha Omelette with Artichokes, roasted Pecan nuts & Smoked Salmon. An Arabic influenced breakfast includes Two fresh eggs cooked to your preference with Humus, Labneh, Foul Medames, Haloumi Cheese and olives. Fresh fruits, freshly squeezed juices, hot beverages of your choice and fresh oven-baked breads – the perfect start to your exciting day at this desert resort.

Lunchtime is all about light contemporary fare – creative and wholesome dishes such as Sweet Onion & Mustard Quiche with Wild Rocket Salad, "Niçoise" Yellow Fin Tuna Carpaccio with Quail Egg, Black Olives and Green Bean or a slightly indulgent Al Maha Kobe Beef sandwich with all the accompaniments. Best to keep light when you are between activities and adventure.

Evenings are a more formal affair, where Al Diwaan transforms into one of the culinary landmarks of the Gulf. The gastronomic indulgence is a gourmet's dream with specialties like Pan-fried scallops with mango & vanilla puree, Foie Gras with mushroom mash, fresh berries and chocolate sauce, "7 hours" braised Lamb Shank with vanilla puree, rosemary jus & root vegetables and the Wagyu Beef Fillet with cauliflower puree, chocolate jelly, potato chips and pomegranate jus, to name but a few . The Al Maha Raspberry Ripple and the Roasted Earl Grey Pannacotta are highly recommended to complete your meal and are truly a treat for the senses.

Dining at Al Diwaan, Al Maha, and A Luxury Collection Desert Resort & Spa is truly a magical and memorable experience.

Al Maha Desert Resort & Spa is a luxury resort in the desert, located only 45 minutes from Dubai.

For more information please visit al-maha.com or call 048329900





spg Starwood Preferred Guest

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**HOT TIP**
When packing linen items, use the rolling technique so the thread is continuous and no folds or creases are made

**1 Tumi** Tegra-Lite suitcase, AED 4,800
**2** Shirt, AED 1,290, **Ralph Lauren Purple Label**
**3** T-shirt, AED 1,595, **Givenchy** at matchesfashion.com
**4** Chinos, AED 787, **Paul Smith**
**5** Loafers, AED 555, **Swims**
**6 Tom Ford** Purifying Face Cleanser, AED 220
**7 Dior** Sauvage Eau de Toilette, AED 470
**8** Sunglasses, AED 3,100, **Bottega Veneta**
**9** Shorts, AED 948, **Incotex** at mrporter.com
**10** Swimming shorts, AED 805, **Vilebrequin**
**11** Towel, AED 1,810, **Loewe**
**12 Aesop** Geranium Leaf Duet Body Cleanser and Balm, AED 423 at mrporter.com
**13** Sneakers, AED 2,376, **Valentino** at stylebop.com

WORDS: JENNY JOHNSON; STYLE: SABINA PARKINSON; PHOTO: RICHARD HALL



# TROPICAL COOL

*Founder of men's fashion and lifestyle portal smf-blog.com and brand ambassador for Tumi, ELIAS EL-INDARI on packing for an island getaway to Zanzibar*

A suitcase full of light fabrics in muted hues suits El-indari's agenda of sunbathing on the pristine beaches along the north-east coast and exploring the museums, markets and architecture of historic Stone Town. Tropical-print swim shorts are ideal for snorkelling in the Indian Ocean, while round sunglasses and a statement beach towel keep the vibe fun.

Planning his outfits around two themes – beachwear and casual attire – El-indari switches from the slim tailored shorts, quirky tee and camouflage sneakers he wears while quad biking to maroon chinos, a linen shirt and braided lace loafers for dinner at The Rock restaurant, a charming spot reachable only by boat at high tide.


Scott Dunn
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# TAKE A SHOT

*Bring the flavour of your vacation back home with you*

One of the great joys of waking up in a hotel room is brewing a quick cup of strong coffee and hopping right back into bed with it – a luxury usually reserved for vacations. It may not be possible to reschedule your morning workout back home or change office hours, but you can cheat that holiday feeling. These days, check in to hotels like the Shangri-La Hotel, at the Shard in London or even the Sheraton Grand Hotel, Dubai and in the room you'll find a sleek machine capable of producing a fresh cuppa in a minute or less – pop in a pod *et voilà!* All the better to get in bed quicker with. So it feels like a bit of pampering to bring one of these gizmos home, like the Inissia, which is compact, quick, smart (it turns itself off so you don't have to) and available in a playful range of colours. Transport yourself further with the brand's limited-edition ristretto pods: the Tribute to Milan captures the fast-paced energy of the fashion capital while the Tribute to Palermo is more strident, reflecting the spicy notes of Sicilian markets. *Buon appetito.* *w*

WORDS: RHEA SARAN; STYLE: SABINA PARKINSON; PHOTOS: EFRAIM EVIDOR, GETTY IMAGES




CNT Classic

Inissia in Ruby Red, AED 550, **Nespresso**

# HANG TIGHT

*A warm scarf, in block colours or patterns, is a lightweight, versatile companion that'll see you through the season*




WORDS: RHEA SARAN; PHOTO: RICHARD HALL; STYLE: SABINA PARKINSON

**1** Black monogramme wool scarf, AED 1,050, **Gucci** **2** Light blue wool scarf, AED 975, **Loewe** **3** Pistol patterned scarf, AED 2,700, **Saint Laurent by Hedi Slimane** **4** Red checked scarf, AED 1,504, **Burberry** at stylebop.com **5** Blue and black patterned scarf, AED 1,132, **Giorgio Armani** **6** Camel wool scarf, AED 1,575, **dunhill** **7** Black Canada wool scarf, AED 547, **Acne** at net-a-porter.com



# STICK 'EM UP

*Multi-purpose make-up sticks help you steal the show with an always-fresh look on the go*




1
**NARS** The Multiple in Copacabana, AED 195

2
**Clinique** Chubby Stick Cheek Colour Balm in Plumped Up Peony, AED 145

3
**Smashbox** L.A. Lights Blendable Lip & Cheek Color in Silver Lake Sunset, AED 155

4
**Benefit** Fine-One-One, AED 150




5
**Chanel** Les Beiges Blush N°20, AED 209

6
**Charlotte Tilbury** Beach Stick in Las Salinas, AED 152 at net-a-porter.com

7
**Dior** Diorblush Cheek Stick in Cosmopolite Pink, AED 160

WORDS: RHEA SARAN; STYLE: SABINA PARKINSON; PHOTO: EFRAIM EVIDOR



Enjoy expertly mixed drinks with friends at the Saturday brunch

# *Feast for* THE SENSES

## Escape to PER AQUUM Desert Palm, the ultimate weekend brunch destination



Asian specialities like sashimi are dished up poolside at the brunch

Set amid the lush grounds of a polo field with panoramic views of Dubai's skyline, PER AQUUM Desert Palm resort is an oasis of avant-garde architecture with stone walls contrasting with delicate blossoms and palm trees. Situated 15 minutes from Downtown Dubai, the retreat offers gourmands an ideal mini break to indulge in two exceptional brunches.

Signature restaurant Rare hosts the Vintage Friday Brunch offering contemporary European cuisine inclusive of cocktails and aromatic dishes paired with the finest grape selection. With live interactive cooking stations, guests can dine indoors or outside on the terrace overlooking the polo fields and, in the distance, the cityscape. Savour house specialities ranging from French oysters and Salmon Wellington to artisanal cheeses served with an assortment of homemade breads and jams.

Double the pleasure on Saturday, at the Asian barbecue and Hendricks-inspired brunch. Start with a refreshing salad before moving on to the live stir-fry stations and finish up with a choice of desserts, all complemented by special cocktails and a Café del Mar soundtrack enjoyed against the backdrop of an azure infinity pool. Round out the afternoon at the Shisha Lounge. As the sun sets, the revelry continues at the Polo Bar, set on an outdoor terrace with complimentary sparkling grape for ladies and an array of fine beverages shaken up by the in-house mixologists.

*For more information call 00971-4-323 8888 or visit desertpalm.peraquum.com*

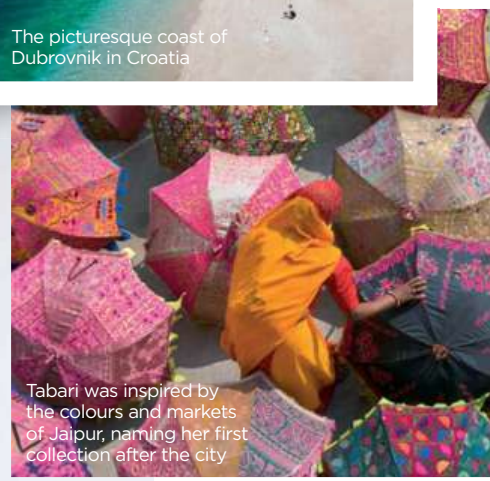
# Destination maven

*Founder of handcrafted fashion label Mochi, AYAH TABARI on artisanal influences and must-visit markets*





The picturesque coast of Dubrovnik in Croatia



Tabari was inspired by the colours and markets of Jaipur, naming her first collection after the city

Born in Riyadh, raised in Amman and now living in Dubai, Palestinian designer Tabari has always been fascinated by diverse cultures and traditional fabrics. Her colourful, embroidered designs are inspired by her journeys, with each collection named after a specific place and handcrafted by local artisans using textiles from that destination.

**What inspired you to create Mochi?**
It all started in India. I have a spiritual connection with the country and I fell in love with all the colours. The word "mochi" grabbed my attention because it means hand-embroidery in an Indian language, which fits with the mirrored embroidery that is common in a lot of my designs. My first collection was inspired by Jaipur, which is so vibrant. There are many markets and little boutiques. I can wander for hours around the Kishanpole Bazaar and Badi Chaupar.

**Why focus each collection on a destination?**
I've been exposed to many different cultures, and living in a place like Dubai, for me celebrating each culture and showcasing that in my clothing is really important. When you buy a Jaipur piece and a Thailand piece, you have two different cultures in your closet with different sewing techniques and fabrics, which is so beautiful. And the ethos of Mochi is to give back to the community.

**Where do you travel to for fun?**
I love the beach, so Croatia was amazing. We sailed between Hvar, Dubrovnik and Split and each had a different vibe. Dubrovnik has beautiful architecture and history, while Hvar is more of a party island; Split has a good mix of nightlife and culture. I got married in the Stellenbosch grape region of South Africa, where there's beautiful scenery everywhere you look and really pure air. Plus, the food is excellent, ranging from the famous South African *braais* (barbecues) to fresh seafood.

**Where do you shop?**
What's important to me is finding unique pieces. Ibiza has really cool hole-in-the-wall boutiques, and London has Rellik for great vintage clothes. In Paris, there are lots of vintage stores and cool, unknown boutiques. My favourites are Omaya Vintage and bric-à-brac Emmaüs. I got the most amazing full-length suede coat from Omaya for just AED 145.

**'Dubrovnik has beautiful architecture, while Hvar is more of a party island; Split has a good mix of nightlife and culture'**

**Do you have a favourite hotel?**
I prefer boutique hotels over big chains. The Albergo in Beirut only has 33 rooms and an antique vibe. I stay there whenever I'm in Beirut, and I now have a personal connection with the staff – they know me by name and ask after my family, which is a nice touch. In Barcelona, I love Gran Hotel La Florida on Mount Tibidabo with views over the city. Closer to home, Anantara Sir Bani Yas Island Al Yamm Villa Resort off the coast of Abu Dhabi is a different world, with exotic wildlife and charming accommodation.



Jaipur crop top and skirt, AED 600, **Mochi**

**What do you never leave home without?**
Obviously my Mochi – it's so easy to wear, whether dressed down with flats for a festival or smartened up with high-waisted trousers and a nice blazer. I don't wear much make-up, but my key pieces are a MAC bronzer and a Guerlain concealer. And a big, round American Apparel hat that covers half my face.

**What are your travel styling tips?**
Everyone needs a pair of denim shorts, a plain white T-shirt and a statement piece like an embroidered jacket or some stand-out heels. People say pack a little black dress, but I would say a little white dress as it's so easy to wear from day to night. CNT

INTERVIEW: JENNY JOHNSON; PHOTOS: CORBIS, GETTY IMAGES

# Delhi's 50 best meals

Ace chef, cookbook author and TV show host **Ritu Dalmia** reveals her top food picks in India's capital city – from the biryani she dreams of to her go-to Italian restaurant

Compressed scallop carpaccio with rock salt ice at Tian. **Opposite**: Chef Ritu Dalmia



I've been running restaurants in Delhi, on and off, since 1994, and much has changed in the last 20 years. A decade ago, I would travel to London just so I could eat well. Today, I can eat the cuisines I like right here in Delhi, and they're of world-class quality. Feel like sashimi? Go to Megu. For authentic Italian, head to Artusi Ristorante e Bar; the fare is equal to what you'd get anywhere in Tuscany. And the dim sum trolleys at Royal China could compete with those at any restaurant in Hong Kong. International food is just one part; to me what's more exciting is the emergence of amazing regional Indian cuisine – Bengali, Tibetan, Kashmiri, Chettinad, Bihari, Naga, Parsi. I think this alone makes Delhi the most happening food destination in India. Whether you're looking for a place with a great atmosphere or a fancy restaurant to impress your date, a quick bite before a movie or amazing street food to fill that hole in your belly, this is the city to eat out in. Here's my pick of its top 50 meals▸

*Photographed by* TOM PARKER

# Fine dining



Preparing a salmon dish at La Piazza

## 1 INDIAN ACCENT

I'm sure you've heard enough people sing paeans to chef Manish Mehrotra's food. But for me, eating here is heartbreaking because I have to accept that my home-cooked food is no longer the best Indian meal I have eaten. Don't believe me? Try the dal *moradabadi* here, which puts every other dal in the country to shame.
*From AED 20; 0091-11-4323 5151, indianaccent.com*

## 2 VARQ

About a decade ago, chef Hemant Oberoi steered Indian cuisine into new waters with this restaurant at the Taj Mahal Hotel. Bringing refined flavours, elegant presentation and subtlety to Indian dishes was, and is, no easy task. While critics denounce this "Frenchification" of Indian food, I believe it increases the diversity and richness. The seafood dishes are especially worth a try.
*From AED 35; 0091-11-6656 6162, tajhotels.com*

## 3 DUM PUKHT

The biryani here wickedly haunts my dreams, taunting me with its aroma of spiced saffron, *ghee*-moistened rice grains and melting chunks of lamb. In my dream, I lift a heaped spoon of this perfect biryani toward my mouth. I become giddy and faint. Then I wake up – in the middle of the night – hungry, drooling and with no hope but to wait patiently for the next day until the restaurant opens.
*From AED 55; 0091-11-2611 2233, itchotels.in*

## AMARANTA

The only place in the NCR I go for seafood. It serves a light and progressive menu representing the nine coastal states of India without losing the authenticity of each dish. They promise a "bay to plate" experience and I believe them.
*Entrees from AED 70; 0091-124-245 1234, oberoihotels.com/hotels-in-gurgaon/restaurants*

## 5 DAKSHIN

Move beyond the tried and tired *idli-dosa* and embrace the diverse cuisines of the southern states at ITC's WelcomHotel-Sheraton New Delhi restaurant. From delicate *appams* with seafood curries and rich stews to excellent vegetable preparations, every dish on this extensive menu will change how you look at southern cuisine. Don't miss out on the array of chutneys and pickles – each one is a revelation in itself.
*From AED 40; 0091-11-4266 1122, itchotels.in*

## 6 TIAN

Chef Vikramjit Roy shows off his expertise in molecular gastronomy through his modern take on Asian cuisine. But the real stars of the meal are the simpler, classic dishes, which showcase a perfect balance of flavour and mastery of technique. Go for a simple Thai curry or for the crazy dessert "eat off your table" – either way, you won't be disappointed.
*From AED 70; 0091-11-3310 5517, itchotels.in/tian*

## 7 NEUNG ROI

This place offers some truly spectacular Thai fare. Be it the delicately balanced curries, the fresh, crisp greens or the perfectly cooked noodles – the flavours in every dish are spot on. While the service leaves a lot to be desired, the food more than makes up for it.
*From AED 85; 0091-11-3310 5346, radissonblu.com*

## 8 THE CHINA KITCHEN

All hail The China Kitchen for freeing Delhi from the shackles of "Chinjabi" food. When this trendy, modern Chinese restaurant opened in 2007, it came as a breath of fresh air because it served authentic cuisine. You can never go wrong with the Peking duck, and my nieces always order double portions of the vegetable pot stickers filled with mushrooms.
*From AED 40; 0091-11-6677 1334, delhi.regency.hyatt.com*



Outdoor seating at Guppy by Ai

## 9 **MEGU**

The Delhi outpost of the eponymous NYC restaurant (that closed its doors last year) may not be authentic Japanese cuisine – rather a hybrid Americanised-Japanese version – but every dish here is expertly prepared with the best possible ingredients. Yes, the restaurant is opulent, expensive, showy and designed to impress – but who said that's a bad thing? Ultimately, the freshest fish in town makes it worth the splash.
*From AED 70; 0091-11-3933 1234, theleela.com*

## 10 **SAN GIMIGNANO**

Tucked inside the Imperial Hotel, Delhi's most charming residence, this restaurant promises an elegant, luxurious experience. The intimate courtyard setting, excellent Italian specialities (signature dishes here include the spinach and ricotta gnocchi with fresh tomato sauce and crispy basil) and grape list, along with the attentive service, ensure that it is visited by a steady stream of regulars.
*From AED 120; 0091-11-4111 6634, theimperialindia.com/san_gimignano*

## 11 **ORIENT EXPRESS**

In the spirit of full disclosure, I confess that I am biased toward this restaurant because it's here that I had my first taste of bubbly. That said, ask anyone who's eaten here and they will assure you that the double-baked Normandy Camembert soufflé is still the best in the city. It's a super-romantic restaurant with serious old-world charm.
*From AED 115; 0091-11-2611 0202, tajhotels.com*

## 12 **LE CIRQUE**

The Leela Palace New Delhi's modern French-Italian restaurant ticks all the boxes as far as food, service and décor are concerned. It's always a lovely (though expensive) treat dining here, but you only live once so order the risotto cooked with bubbly.
*From AED 60; 0091-11-3933 1390, theleela.com*

## 13 **LA PIAZZA**

The inventor of Delhi's Sunday brunch culture over two decades ago, this restaurant at the Hyatt Regency has stood the test of time as one of the city's best Italian joints. The faux trattoria ambience might seem faded now, but focus your attention on the superb wood-fired pizzas.
*From AED 50; 0091-11-6677 1310, delhi.regency.hyatt.com*

## 14 **YAUATCHA**

When you're treating yourself to a PVR Cinema Director's Cut movie, you'd do well to make an event of it by booking a table at nearby Yauatcha, before or after. I love the variety of ▸



Chef Manish Mehrotra of Indian Accent



Peanut butter and beetroot *tikki* with wasabi caper chutney at Indian Accent

**People sing paeans to chef Manish Mehrotra's food. But for me, eating here is heartbreaking because I have to accept that my home-cooked food is no longer the best Indian meal I have eaten**

dim sum here, and the stir-fried beef.
*From AED 27; 0091-11-4958 4400, www.yauatcha.com/newdelhi*

### 15 **GUPPY BY AI**
Playful, eccentric and cute are apt adjectives to describe this modern Japanese restaurant. Careful, though – too many of the excellent drinks (try the wasabi cocktail) and you might end up imagining yourself as a character in an anime. Luckily, the extensive menu offers some great twists on classic dishes, like miso-marinated black cod, to help you return to reality.
*From AED 26; 0091-11-2469 0005, olivebarandkitchen.com*

### 16 **ROYAL CHINA**
It's easy to see why this is Delhi's favourite Chinese restaurant. Located in an office building in Nehru Place, it offers sweeping views of the city along with an extensive range of Cantonese dishes, each with measured competency. The highlight of any meal here: the dim sum, which are truly some of the best in the city.
*From AED 26; 0091-11-4981 8000, royalchinaindia.com*

### 17 **ARTUSI RISTORANTE E BAR**
This tiny restaurant in Greater Kailash 2 is where I go when I need to get away from work yet want to eat Italian. The handmade pastas are superb, and the panna cotta with stewed figs is just perfect.
*From AED 40; 0091-11-4906 6666, artusibar.in*

## Street food

### 18 **BIKANERVALA**
The perfect place to get your fix of all the Indian street food you've been craving – from *chaat* to *pav bhaji* to samosas to, yes, vegetarian *kathi* rolls – you'll find it all. The hardest part will be looking at the array of choices and deciding what to order. I usually get around that by ordering just about everything.
*From AED 5; 0091-92-1041 1646, bikanervala.com*

### 19 **KAMAL'S**
This *dhaba* in Sundar Nagar does the regular *chaat* and vegetarian tandoori fare, but I go there for the stuffed *chaap* or soya *chaap*. My meat-loving friends call it the vegetarian's cheap-thrill dish because of its meaty texture. Be that as it may, it tastes very good.
*From AED 6; 0091-11-2435 8735*

### 20 **MOOLCHAND PARATHE WALA**
There are no boards to indicate where this stall stands; no neon signs, no valets on call. You'll know you're at the right place when ▸



Yellowfin tuna tartare with caperberry at Le Cirque

you see a huge crowd in front of a *paratha* stand. Most people who live in Delhi have been here at some point. Moolchand features on my list not only for nostalgia value, but also for its great egg *parathas*.
*From AED 9; 0091-99-9975 8374*

## 21 NATRAJ DAHI BHALLA CORNER

If an eatery has served only two items since its opening in 1940 and is still packed to the gills, you can bet they are both fantastic. This street corner stall only makes magically soft *dahi bhalla* and impossibly crisp *aloo tikki* – and both will be the best you've ever eaten.
*From AED 3; 0091-98-11-16 7400, natrajdahibhalla.siteplus.in*

## 22 BILLE DI HATTI

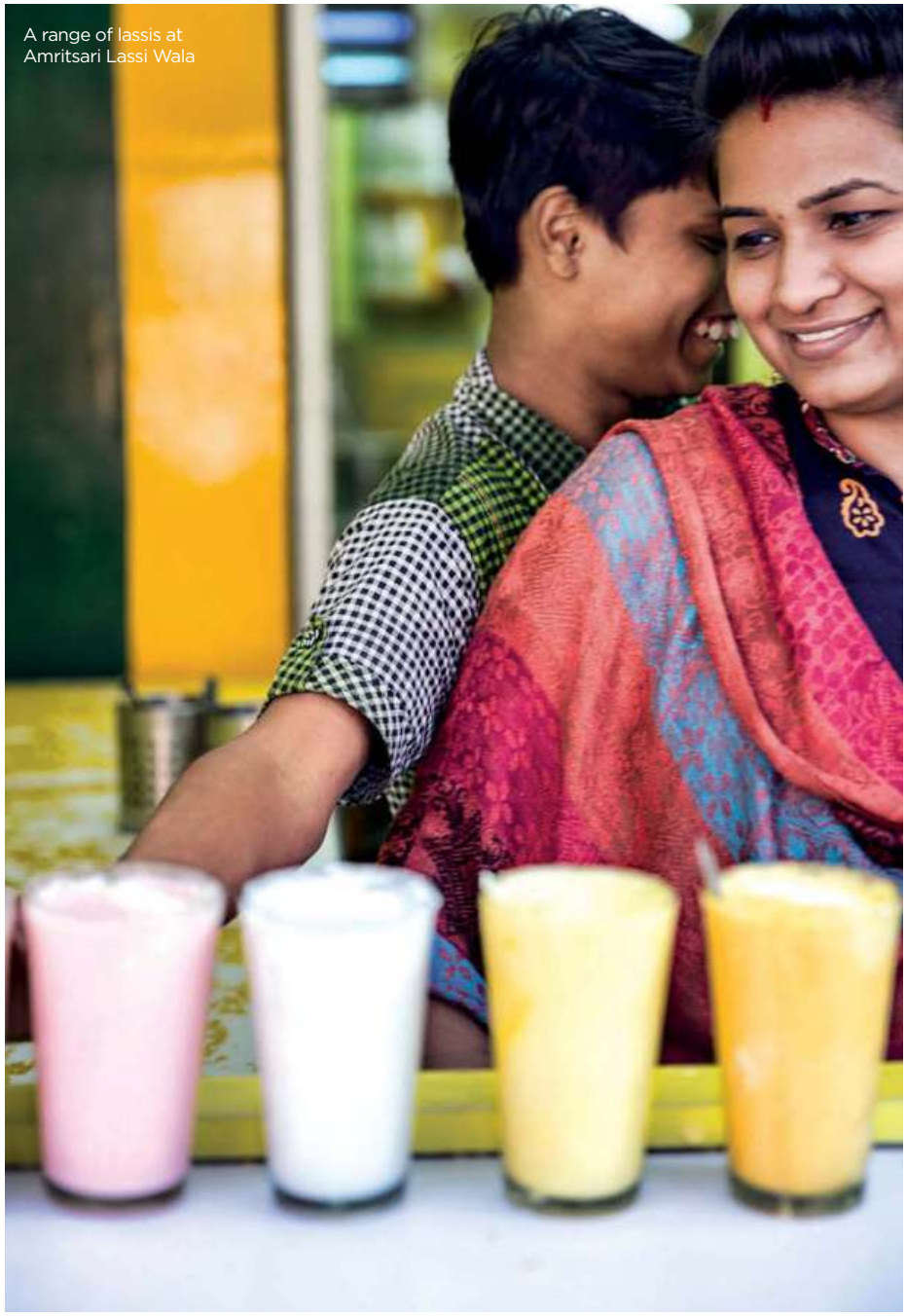
The queues at this street stall in Kamla Nagar begin forming at 8am and by lunch, the star dish, *chhola bhatura*, is all sold out. You won't understand the craze till you try it.
*From AED 3; 0091-11-6580 8227*

## 23 AL JAWAHAR

Tradition is a lovely thing, especially when it allows culinary secrets to seep down the centuries and give us 21st-century folk an opportunity to dine like the Mughals. Standing across from the gate to Jama Masjid in Old Delhi, this eatery carries secrets of how to char kebabs to perfection, create the most flavourful *nihari* and prepare a soft, yeasty, heart-warming *sheermal*. Mughal emperor Akbar would approve of the finesse and skill displayed by the cooks here in manipulating meats to create the stuff of legend. You can even order a whole stuffed goat, if you order in advance.
*From AED 7; 0091-11-2327 5987*

## 24 OLD FAMOUS JALEBI WALA

The name says it all – the place has been famous for a long time and rightfully so. One bite of the hot, thick, crisp, juicy *jalebis* and you'll be ready to pay obeisance to their maker.
*From AED 20; 0091-11-2325 6973*


A range of lassis at Amritsari Lassi Wala

## 25 TEWARI BROS CONFECTIONERS

As a Kolkatan at heart, I will always claim that the original Tewari Bros has the best samosas, but I have to concede that the Chandni Chowk branch matches up to the original quite well. If you've suffered many limp casings and bland fillings, your faith in the humble snack will be restored with these flaky, hot pastries with perfectly spiced stuffing.
*From AED 9; 0091-11-2392 7690*

## 26 AMRITSARI LASSI WALA

How good can a glass of lassi get? Drink one here to find out. After all the stomach-burning spicy food of Chandni Chowk, it is absolutely essential to let one of the cooling milk-based drinks here soothe your very happy tummy. Many Dilliwalas swear by the *malai* lassi, but my favourite is mango-flavoured.
*From AED 3; 0091-98-1005 5621*

## 27 CHAINA RAM SINDHI CONFECTIONERS

Indian sweets are truly an art mastered by very few. And this city institution deserves every accolade that has been thrown its way in its many decades of existence. First-timers are encouraged to try the famed Karachi *halwa*. But really, every single *mithai* here is a stunner. My advice would be to work your way through the offerings – from milk cake to *balushahis* – on every subsequent visit.
*From AED 6; 0091-11-2392 7585*

## 28 SIDDIQUE'S KHEER SHOP

First, you must read the book *Korma, Kheer And Kismet* by Pamela Timms to understand why the *kheer* here is so special (the shop and its owner are featured). Then trek over to Chandni Chowk one morning and savour the best *kheer* you will ever eat.
*Close to Chawri Bazaar Metro Station*



A meat dish at Al Jawahar

# Casual dining

## 29 SODABOTTLEOPENERWALA

How do you take a concept that's generations old and make it the next hip thing? By having fun with it. From the quirky ambience to the cheeky cocktails, a meal at SodaBottleOpenerWala will never fail to make you chuckle. But you will also keep returning for the lost glory of Parsi dishes like berry *pulao*, *dhansak* and eggs *kejriwal* with toast that you didn't even know you craved.
*From AED 10; 0091-11-3310 5055, olivebarandkitchen.com*

## 30 COAST CAFÉ, OGAAN

A warm, inviting vibe, friendly service and excellent food – this place has everything a café should. Nestled above the OGAAN store, the space is beautifully designed to transport you away from the chaos of Hauz Khas Village. The minimalistic menu is crafted to showcase speciality coastal cuisine. Don't miss the Kerala grilled chicken and the prawn *moilee*.
*From AED 14; 0091-11-4160 1717*

## 31 ELMA'S BAKERY

The test of any bakery is the quality of its bread, and Elma's in Hauz Khas Village passes with flying colours. You'll want to curl up in its plush armchairs with a good book and enjoy a pot of tea while eyeing the pastries and cakes on display. But don't just eye them, take a big bite of carrot cake and smile in sweet contentment.
*From AED 24; 0091-11-2652 1020*

## 32 TRES

This charming restaurant in Lodhi Colony has minimalist décor, a seasonal menu and a fun bar. It's perfect for an easy evening of good food and great cocktails.
*From AED 35; 0091-11-2462 5520, tresrestaurant.in*

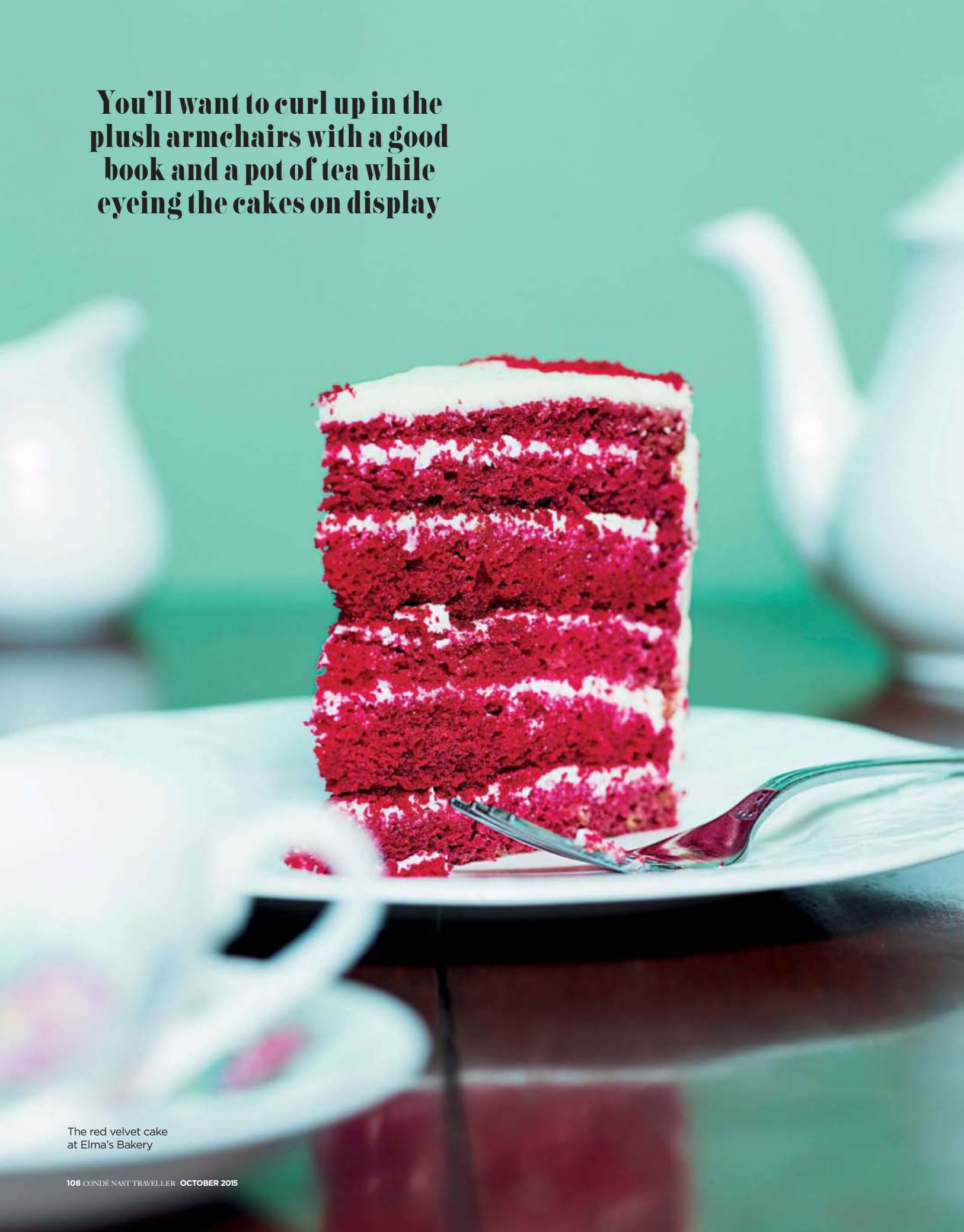
## 33 ZIZO

Finally, here's an establishment that takes Lebanese cuisine beyond hummus and falafel. The owners of Zizo are crazy enough to fly in staples like pita, *zaatar*, halloumi and *baklava* from Lebanon, and serve it at throwaway prices. So go devour the delectable *mezze* and *man'oushe* before they come to their senses.
*From AED 14; 0091-70-4255 5444, zizo.in*

## 34 CAFÉ AT KOREAN CULTURAL CENTRE

Even though Korean food is booming in the West, it's still relatively unheard of in India. I love this place for its excellent classics, such as *kimchi* fried rice and *bibimbap*.
*From AED 50; 0091-11-4334 5000*

**You'll want to curl up in the plush armchairs with a good book and a pot of tea while eyeing the cakes on display**



The red velvet cake at Elma's Bakery




The interior of Elma's **Right**
The rustic Le Bistro du Parc




### 35 **LE BISTRO DU PARC**

Cosy, charming, rustic and adorable – this tiny French eatery is all of these things. The ever-changing menu is small, which may put some off – but as they say, good things come in small packages. I always go in the hope that the salted caramel flan is on the menu.
*From AED 17; 0091-11-4678 0080, lebistroduparc.com*

### 36 **OH! CALCUTTA**

It's the perfect introduction to the world of Bengali food. Immerse yourself in the joys of food cooked in mustard oil and savour one of India's richest cuisines. Regular patrons swear by the fish preparations, but I prefer the classic *daab chingri* and *mishti doi*.
*From AED 16; 0091-11-3040 2415*

### 37 **CAFÉ LOTA**

Tucked away in the National Crafts Museum, at Pragati Maidan, Café Lota is an absolute gem. I love that the menu showcases pan-Indian dishes that are rarely seen on restaurant menus. The simple, home-style cooking helps it cut through the crowd and make its mark. Go for the *kadak chai*, *dal ka chila* and Bombay *keema* "bao".
*From AED 10; 0091-78-3896 0787*

## Regional eats

### 38 **YETI – THE HIMALAYAN KITCHEN**

Tibetan cuisine may be limited by geographical constraints, but it's delicious nonetheless. The steaming bowls of spicy *thukpa* are supremely satisfying in Delhi's chilly winter, but if you're feeling adventurous order the offal.
*From AED 15; 0091-11-4067 8649*

### 39 **MAA TARA**

This hole in the wall is the eatery Delhi's Bengalis flock to – they swear by its authenticity. The food is as traditional as it gets, engulfed in the aromas of fish being cooked in mustard oil. Sometimes I go because I miss hearing the loud lilt of Bangla – but mostly I go for the food.
*From AED 3; 0091-11-2627 7029*

### 40 **RAJDHANI, THE VEGETARIAN THALI RESTAURANT**

The Rajasthani *thali* here takes me back to the food I ate as a child. Of course, no restaurant could ever match up to the Rajasthani food served in homes, but whenever I'm craving some *dal baati choorma*, I show up at the Saket outpost.
*From AED 26; 0091-11-4101 7236, rajdhani.co.in*

### 41 **THE POTBELLY ROOFTOP CAFÉ**

A bohemian café serving Bihari cuisine sounds strange, to say the least. The food of Bihar is rarely ever placed on restaurant menus, let alone considered a cuisine. But one visit will change your view completely, and you'll be sold. A visit to Potbelly is both academic and hedonistic – don't miss the *litti chokha* and *tehri*. There's also a range of *thalis* on offer.
*From AED 16; 0091-11-4161 2048*

### 42 **KASHMIRI KITCHEN**

Run by a mother and daughter duo, this small restaurant in Ghitorni specialises in Kashmiri cuisine. The *goshtaba* and the *yakhni* are outstanding, and the good news is that if you don't want to trek over, you can get food home-delivered.
*From AED 14; 0091-95-8285 6612, kashmirikitchen.in*

### 43 **SAMAVAR**

This establishment does great Pandit food from Kashmir. The ambience is not much▸

to write home about, but the food more than makes up for it. The *rajma*, *nadur churma* and *kabargah* are a must.
*From AED 10; 0091-96-5466 6795*

## 44 **EMBASSY**

It's rare for an establishment with an unchanged menu to survive for more than 60 years. Embassy is one of those vintage restaurants that opened in Connaught Place in a newly independent India and continues to serve the popular cuisines of that day – classic north Indian dishes and "Continental" cuisine. Order the *chole bhatura* – I guarantee it will knock your socks off.
*From AED 17; 0091-11-2341 6434, embassyrestaurant.in*

## 45 **HAVEMORE**

Delhi can't get more Punjabi than this little square of Pandara Road – gaudy lights, a kitschy fountain and restaurants with huge neon signs. But if you live in Delhi, you need to have your fix of Havemore and its tandoori classics. And if you are visiting, you ought to make a trip just to get "Punjufied".
*From AED 18; 0091-85-2773 6414*

## 46 **MOTI MAHAL DELUX**

It's said that the original Moti Mahal in Daryaganj is where butter chicken was first invented. That may well be true, but my favourite Moti Mahal is the obscure one in the Malcha Marg market, where the butter chicken and *kaali* dal hit the spot.
*From AED 17; 0091-11-2327 3661, motimahalindia.com*

## 47 **CARNATIC CAFÉ**

New Friends Colony's neighbourhood secret serves the best South Indian snacks in the city. The food retains the essence of simple, home-cooked food. The signature Malleshwaram 18th Cross is everything a *dosa* should be – crisp on the outside, soft and chewy on the inside, with a generous smear of spicy gunpowder. The amount of *ghee* might give you a heart attack, but it's worth the risk. OK, I confess – when I'm on a diet, I order the *ragi dosa*.
*From AED 5; 0091-11-4100 8630*

## 48 **ANDHRA PRADESH BHAVAN CANTEEN**

Follow the crowd, buy a token and patiently wait your turn at this legendary Delhi canteen. There is no fixed menu here – it changes daily. Be prepared to face a lavish, unending meal with several vegetable preparations, meat curry, *sambar*, rice, *puris* and more. If you are brave enough, attempt the Sunday lunch queue for the famed Hyderabadi biryani.
*From AED 8; 0091-11-2338 2031*



Roasted lamb being prepared at Le Bistro du Parc

## 49 **SARAVANA BHAVAN**

Has the capital's outpost of this Chennai institution managed to live up to the reputation of the original? The long queues outside certainly make it seem so. Despite the stiff competition in the *idli-dosa* market, Saravana is still miles ahead. I have been told by all my Tamil friends that this is where *sambar* tastes the way it should. But for me, what does the trick is the *medu vada* – perfectly fried, light and fluffy.
*From AED 6; 0091-44-2480 2577, saravanabhavan.com*

## 50 **DZÜKOU TRIBAL KITCHEN**

The cuisine of Northeastern India is far removed from other Indian cuisines and consistently reliable versions are hard to come by in Delhi. One of the reasons I love eating the Nagaland food here is that each time I try a dish, I learn something new. From the smoked meat curries with the fiery chillies to fermented soya, all the dishes demand your attention.
*From AED 15; 0091-8-44-770 3774, dzukoutribalkitchen.com* CNT



Smoked pork at
Dzükou Tribal Kitchen

*Written by* **DAVID PRIOR** | *Photographed by* **BRETT STEVENS**

# THE WIZARDS OF OZ

WAY DOWN IN SLEEPY ADELAIDE, IT'S TAKEN AN EXPAT SCOTSMAN TO BRING AUSTRALIA BACK TO ITS CULINARY ROOTS – AND IN SO DOING, CREATE THE WORLD'S NEXT GREAT FOOD DESTINATION

Overlooking Hanson Bay from Kangaroo Island



The *mise en place* at Jock Zonfrillo's restaurant, Orana, resembles a painter's palette of foraged herbs, flowers, leaves and nuts. This is the cornerstone of Zonfrillo's new kind of Australian cuisine



Seared prawns and Davidson plums at Orana

When the blossoms of the bat's wing coral tree begin to fall, Aboriginal women know it's time to dig through the mangrove mud for fresh crabs. And when the milky oyster flower blooms, it's nature's signal that the shoreline beds are lined with fat shellfish. The indigenous people of Australia view themselves not as rulers of the environment but as one with it. Seasons are measured not with calendars but by the changing of the winds, the blooming of plants and the seeding of grasses. The women's encyclopaedic knowledge of plants and animals has been passed from generation to generation, and before colonisation in the 18th century, they didn't just survive on the land, they thrived there.

But today, sadly, that knowledge remains untapped by most Australians. Sad because its literal fruits can be downright startling. "I call it the spontaneous-facial-myalgia response," says Jock Zonfrillo with a laugh, of the sometimes horrified reactions he sees from Australians at his tiny 25-seat restaurant Orana, in Adelaide. "They screw their faces up – and that's before they even taste anything." He's speaking purely of his food, but Zonfrillo might be referring to something else: a deeply held prejudice that may have more to do with culture than cuisine.

Zonfrillo, who moved to South Australia (by way of Sydney) from Scotland in 2000, is trying to change all that. The menu at the almost two-year-old Orana (the name means "welcome" in an Aboriginal dialect) is a revelatory tribute to Australia's wild and uncharted fecundity, from obscure plants and fruits (violet lilly pilly, finger lime) to fabled animals, including kangaroos, wallabies and crocodiles. With Orana, Zonfrillo has joined the vanguard of Australian chefs whose respect for the land and curiosity about the country's too-often ignored history are not only helping to bridge the deep cultural divide between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians but are also beginning to answer the once unanswerable question: What, after all, is Australian cuisine?

Food on the continent often takes first-time visitors by surprise. They come in search of landscapes and wildlife and leave wistful about that perfect cup of coffee or that better-than-in-Beijing-or-Bologna restaurant meal. Multicultural, well-travelled and increasingly affluent, Australians have developed a cosmopolitan palate and are masters in the art of appropriation and reinvention. And yet something has long held back the native cuisine – namely, the perception that, despite the bounty of endemic flora and fauna, the food here has always been a copy of some other culture's, some other country's. It is that very lack of a definable Australian flavour profile which has prevented it from finding a permanent place on the world's gastronomic map.

Appropriately, it took the culinary world's ultimate outsider-turned-insider, Noma founder René Redzepi, to sound the wake-up call. (Though the terrains of Denmark and Australia could scarcely be more different, the gastronomic challenges in the two countries are oddly similar.) In 2010, he stood onstage at the Sydney Opera House and admonished the local chefs assembled before him. "I come here and I don't know what Australia tastes like," he said. "You have some of the best chef talent in the world, but why aren't you using the ingredients all around you?"

Redzepi's message hit home. Just five years later, menus in many of the country's finest establishments not only integrate native ingredients but make them the stars of the show. In Sydney, chef Kylie Kwong serves up what she light-heartedly calls "Chinese bush tucker", in which Peking duck is given a new piquancy courtesy of the tart native fruit quandong, and wallaby tail is braised in five-spice powder. At Melbourne's Attica, Ben Shewry wraps▸



Diver Paul Polacco hand-picks urchins and scallops off Kangaroo Island

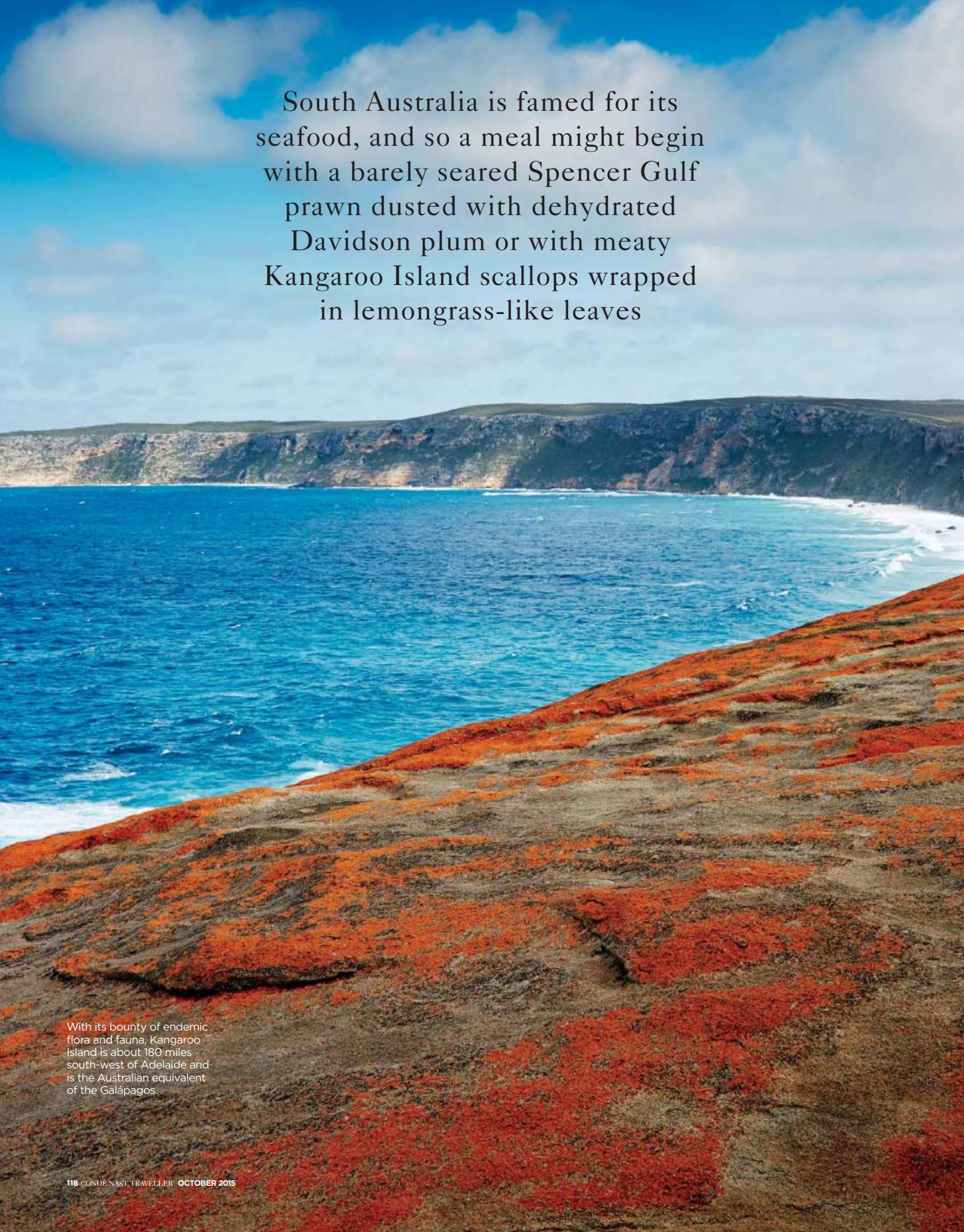


Flinders Chase National Park on Kangaroo Island



Food in Australia often takes first-time visitors by surprise. They come in search of landscapes and wildlife and leave wistful about that perfect cup of coffee or that better-than in-Beijing-or-Bologna restaurant meal

South Australia is famed for its seafood, and so a meal might begin with a barely seared Spencer Gulf prawn dusted with dehydrated Davidson plum or with meaty Kangaroo Island scallops wrapped in lemongrass-like leaves



With its bounty of endemic flora and fauna, Kangaroo Island is about 180 miles south-west of Adelaide and is the Australian equivalent of the Galápagos



A western grey kangaroo bounds through the Kelly Hill Conservation Area on – where else? – Kangaroo Island



Saltwater crocodile with fermented mangrove seed and black ant salt at Orana

King George whiting in paperbark from the tea tree, an Australian take on fish *en papillote*.

But of all those who heard Redzepi's call to action, it is Zonfrillo who has arguably taken it most to heart. Like Noma – where Zonfrillo worked before moving to cook at Forty One in Sydney – Orana embraces a philosophy of cooking informed by nature and place. This came, in part, because of the 38-year-old chef's other big revelation, one that led to a years-long (and ongoing) immersion in Aboriginal traditions and food. Before Orana even opened, Zonfrillo was travelling to native communities around the countryside, sometimes for months at a time, foraging through the bush, in backyards and along roadsides for ever-more-unusual ingredients. "At first, some of the people didn't want anything to do with me," he remembers. "I really had to work on building trust. But once I did, they were incredibly generous." This year, Zonfrillo plans to launch the Orana Foundation, an organisation dedicated to preserving Aboriginal food knowledge by connecting native foragers and elders to restaurants and consumers. "We're only a few years away from losing a generation of elders," he says, "and to lose all of that knowledge would be a tragedy for Australia."

For now, though, there is Zonfrillo's own education, which is evidenced in every plate he serves at Orana. The multi-course dinner here is presented along with a number of small dishes – which the chef calls *alkoopina*, the Dieyerie tribe's word for snacks – and which together create a sort of hymn to the region's richness. South Australia is famed for its seafood, and so a meal might begin with a barely seared Spencer Gulf prawn dusted with dehydrated Davidson plum (a rainforest fruit) or with meaty Kangaroo Island scallops wrapped in lemongrass-like leaves of Geraldton wax – a flower more likely to be found in a prom corsage or a vase on an elderly woman's mantel. Next might be a samphire (a wild coastal vegetable) risotto accompanied by smoked 'roo tail, or chewy ribbons of crocodile served in a puddle of fermented grey mangrove seeds and peppered with black ant salt.

But Zonfrillo tips his hat to contemporary flavours as well as indigenous ones. Fried wild saltbush tastes uncannily like salt-and-vinegar potato chips, and shaved pumpkin roasted in beef fat recalls a classic Sunday roast. But it's while sampling the palate cleanser, a wild salad of native and invasive species, that many diners have the revelatory moment that Zonfrillo hopes to evoke. Astringent and fibrous yet delicately sweet, it's both complex and straightforward. And it achieves the ultimate: It tastes like Australia.

If one part of Zonfrillo's revolution involves his embrace of Aboriginal flavours, the other part involves his embrace of Adelaide itself. Although the city of 1.3 million people has a proud past – it was the first on the continent to be established by free citizens rather than convicts – it is today thought of as an also-ran, sleepy and provincial in comparison to sophisticated Sydney and Melbourne.

Yet the town, and the surrounding region, might also be considered the home of Australia's own so-called paddock-to-plate movement, a place which has always embraced a style of eating that was more about ▸

pleasure and taste than sustenance. It was here that, in the 1800s, the first Germans and Italians settled, bringing with them their love of food and grape. Today, Adelaide is arguably the country's grape capital, and in every direction the suburbs yield quickly to vineyards dotted with rusty tin sheds and hemmed in by bush. It is an unmistakably South Australian landscape.

In the late 19th century, a terrible phylloxera wiped out most of the country's old-world vines. But because South Australia is so isolated – 850 miles west of Sydney; 460 miles north-west of Melbourne – its vines managed to survive. This means that the regions around Adelaide now have some of the oldest producing vines in the world. You can find robust shiraz in the Barossa Valley and delicate rieslings in the Clare. McLaren Vale has Italian nebbiolo; the Adelaide Hills are home to exciting young biodynamic grape-makers; and there's a powerful cabernet sauvignon being produced in the *terra rossa* of Coonawarra. Each of the regions is within a couple hours of Adelaide, making the city for oenophile travellers what San Francisco is to Napa and Sonoma.

Like northern California, South Australia is the birthplace of a particular style of rustic yet refined cooking. Alice Waters has her antipodean equal in Maggie Beer, a 70-year-old bush matriarch and self-taught cook who was the first to bring real attention to food in the Barossa Valley. In 1978, Beer and her husband, Colin, opened Pheasant Farm, the restaurant responsible for changing the way Australians think about provenance and seasonality. She fused a European cooking style with a gutsy, generous Australian approach, one that is still emulated in the cafés and bistros of South Australia. Pheasant Farm closed in the Nineties, but Beer continues to run a shop on the original site, where visitors come to buy pâté, verjuice, and burnt-caramel and fig ice cream for the road.

And while the land here is rich with plantings and farms, it's also thrillingly wild. Just off the coast of South Australia is one of the country's most beautiful anomalies, Kangaroo Island. Often referred to as Australia's Galápagos for its varied and unique animal life, the island has a dramatic coastline populated by seals and birdlife; farmland with more kangaroos than sheep; and roads populated by echidnas gingerly attempting to avoid encounters with four-wheel-drive cars. But it's the less visible life that really intrigues. The creeks teem with freshwater marron, the lobster's sweet Australian cousin, and the sea with fields of scallops and abalone. The island is also home to the world's best-preserved bee sanctuary. Immigrants from Italy brought their Ligurian bees to Kangaroo Island a century ago, and now that the bee is extinct in Italy, this island is the only place it still exists. The honey it produces from native wildflowers is prized globally for its distinct flavour and delicacy.

"You can find incredible produce here," says Zonfrillo. But more important than that, perhaps, is that in South Australia, you can feel the collision of old Australia – a culture dating back 40,000 years – and new, and shimmering on the horizon, something else completely: a cuisine that, by combining both, creates something altogether original. It's nothing less than the story of Australia itself. "Just as indigenous art beautifully depicts our landscape and brings Australians together," says Maggie Beer, "so too can food." A country that revels in reinvention deserves nothing less. CNT



Jock Zonfrillo in the Adelaide Hills

## NEED TO KNOW
# ADELAIDE

### WHERE TO STAY

**The Louise**
A comfortable base in the heart of the Barossa Valley grape region. *Doubles from AED 1,310; 0061-8-8562 2722, thelouise.com.au*

**Southern Ocean Lodge**
The ultimate in discreet luxury, it sits in the windswept wilderness of Kangaroo Island. *Doubles from AED 2,915 per person per night; 0061-2-9918-4355, southernoceanlodge.com.au*

### WHERE TO EAT

**Orana**
Jock Zonfrillo's 25-seat restaurant on Rundle Street serves native Australian fare using foraged indigenous ingredients. *Six-course menu, AED 570; 0061-8-8232 3444, restaurantorana.com*

**Street ADL**
Orana's accessible counterpart, this industrial-chic eatery serves accessible Aussie street food below Zonfrillo's fine-diner. *Entrées from AED 70; 0061-8-8227 0344, streetadl.com*

### WHAT TO DO

**Arkaba Station**
This sheep station-turned-nature reserve on the southern end of Flinders Chase National Park is one of Australia's most stunning natural landmarks. *0061-2-9571 6399, arkabastation.com*

### GETTING THERE

Emirates *(emirates.com)* flies direct to Adelaide from Dubai



Scallops and crayfish at Street ADL



Navarra's rich selection of vegetables is made possible by the near-perfect growing conditions in the fertile Ebro River Valley

# Stake in the ground

In Spain's sleepy province of Navarra, the region's native sons and daughters are upending the national primacy of *jamón* and *croquetas*. Taking their cues from farming traditions that date back to Roman times, a few pioneering chefs are turning out bold, vegetable-centric plates that are defining the next great food scene

*Written by* **STEPHEN ORR** | *Photographed by* **PEDEN & MUNK**

We didn't plan to visit the tiny medieval hill town of Ujué, but there my husband and I were, wandering through a maze of precariously pitched cobblestoned streets. One of the few groups of tourists, Spanish pensioners, had disappeared an hour or so before in a cloud of bus fumes having scratched off their list the town's one attraction of note, the Romanesque cathedral. It appeared that we had Ujué entirely to ourselves, the silence broken only by noisy crows dive-bombing a hawk in the meadow below.

A fortressed town perched high on a promontory, Ujué has slanted roof lines and crumbling façades that seem to defy the rules of perspective, like a 3D version of a De Chirico painting. All around us were rolling hills lined with well-tended almond trees. And yet where was everyone? Smoke trailed from a chimney, so there were indeed residents – but they were nowhere to be seen. I wondered if this was how San Gimignano felt in the Sixties, before the onslaught of tourism.

Travellers on African safaris look for the Big Five, but I was in Navarra – a northern province of Spain sandwiched between La Rioja and Aragon – in search of my own big five (or six, really): *piquillo* peppers, *cogollos de lechuga* (lettuce hearts), *borraja* (borage), *cardo* (cardoon, a relative of the artichoke), *pochas* (shell beans) and *alcachofas* (artichokes). Few visitors make their way to this region except during July's festival of San Fermín (or the Running of the Bulls) in Pamplona, or to walk one of the famous pilgrimage routes that lead from France to Santiago de Compostela.

And that was the other reason I had come to Navarra: to find a Spain that few seek, and fewer find. Barcelona, where I lived briefly in my twenties, is now a rowdy party town. Madrid, as fabulous as it is, bustles with tourists and nightlife. But on this trip to Spain, I wanted to see someplace different – unspoiled, where life is still lived at a drowsy pace.

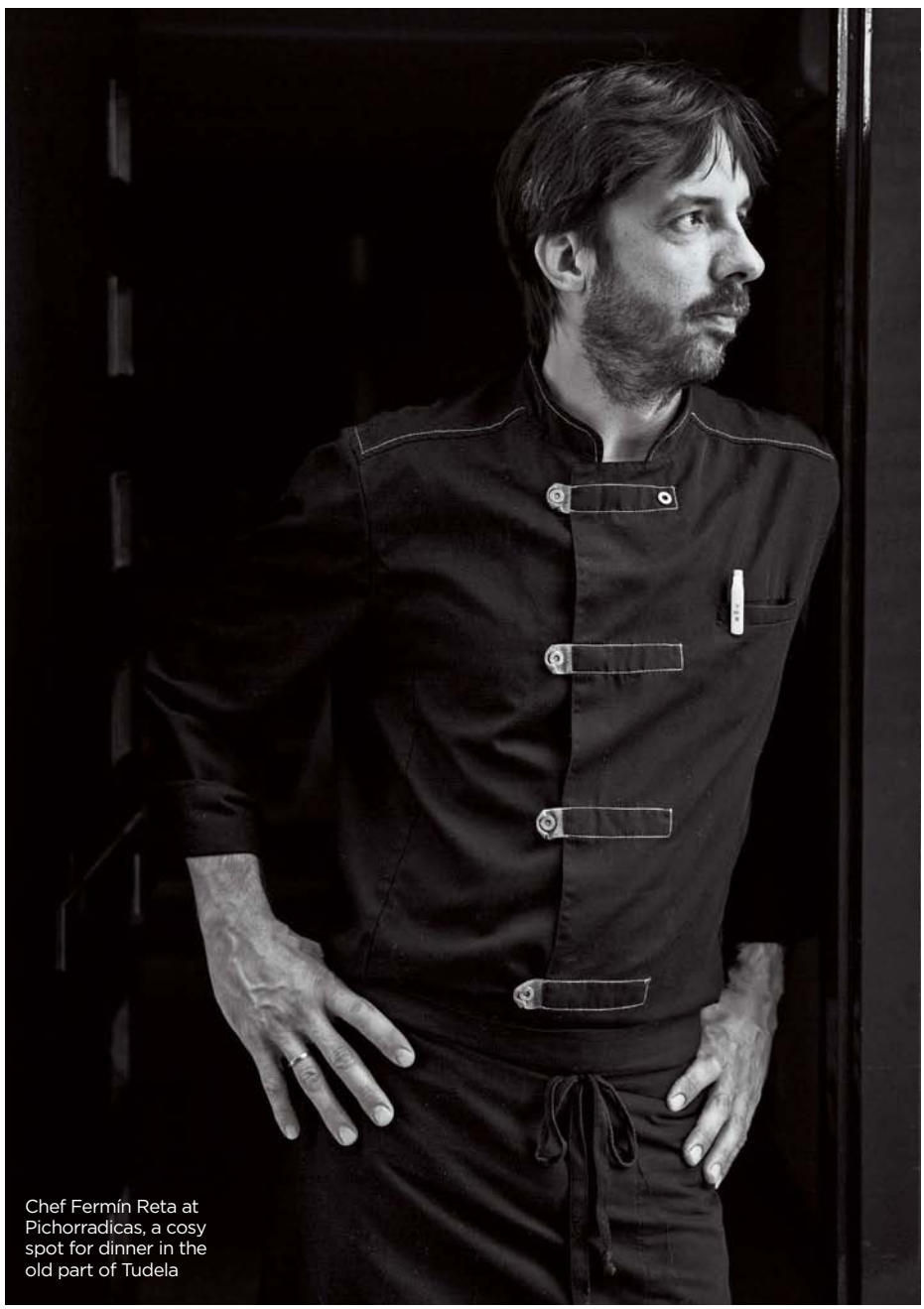
Spain has always been known for its *jamón*, *queso* and *croquetas*. But Navarra, a Spanish friend told me, is renowned for the freshness and quality of its produce. The wide, meandering Ebro, at nearly 600 miles the longest river in Spain, and its historic floodplain have created an ideal site for agriculture since Roman times, one whose fruits and vegetables are so treasured that some of the varieties grown here are given their own DO (Denominación de Origen), similar to the AOC awarded to French grape. Tart, smoky *piquillo* peppers come from the tiny town of Lodosa; the most tender lettuces, artichokes and cardoons are grown in Tudela; and shell beans and borage, a mild, stemmy herb, thrive in La Ribera. Each spring in Tudela, there's even a Jornadas de Exaltación y Fiestas de la Verdura (roughly translated as "Days of Exaltation and Festivals of the Vegetables"), where local growers exhibit and sell their prized produce. Here, I would be able to drive through fields of peppers and beans, to see tight-leaved lettuce hearts surrounded by cracked alluvial soils. I would get to discover how that produce was being transformed by chefs into some of the most innovative (yet unheralded) vegetable-rich cuisine in Spain today, all just an hour from the chef-centric flights-of-fanciness you'll find in San Sebastián. And I'd get to do so in a part of the country where you'll find Gothic cathedrals and Romanesque churches in every little village, most of them undiscovered by tourists.

Our first stop was Pamplona, a leafy, well-heeled university town of nearly 200,000. After a *café cortado* at Hemingway's favourite hangout, the historic Café Iruña on the grand main ▸

square, we headed off to La Nuez at what we thought was a fashionable Spanish lunch hour, 2pm – only to find ourselves the sole customers. But this gave us a chance to study the menu, and as the space filled with chatting locals, we ate stewed artichokes, white asparagus in a mousseline sauce and a deconstructed Niçoise salad of Basque tuna accompanied by a bottle of dry verdejo from Rueda.

Founded by the Roman general Pompey in 75 BC, Pamplona (Iruña in Basque, which has heavily influenced the region's food and language) is today a thriving European city. At La Olla, a warmly lit tavern, you might see well-coiffed women of a certain age eating *txangurro*, a delicate crab gratin, or groups of businessmen from one of the local automobile manufacturing headquarters making deals over Navarran tomatoes topped with preserved tuna followed by braised oxtail and bottles of garnacha. Here, as at most places, we were the only foreign visitors.

If Pamplona is the largest, most vibrant city in the province, Tudela, an hour's drive south, is its most soulful. Surrounded by expansive fields of peppers, artichokes and beans and nestled in a slow curve of the Ebro, this town of 35,000 is a *mille-feuille* of Jewish, Muslim and Christian history, each layer built atop the remains of its predecessors; the massive 12th-century cathedral was erected on the site of the city's former 9th-century mosque turned synagogue.



Chef Fermín Reta at Pichorradicas, a cosy spot for dinner in the old part of Tudela

Its Puerta del Juicio (Gate of Judgment), an 800-year-old arched doorway depicting the Last Judgment is most notable for its scenes of demonic torture: The gruesome carvings of devils dismembering sinners and pouring hot oil down the throats of the condemned reminded parishioners of the wages of sin as they came and went from services.

It was in Tudela that we found the promised rising food scene. The restaurant Trinquete sits on a nondescript street on the borderline of the old and modern parts of the city. Out front we saw a man, brawny, bearded and soaked in sweat, unloading crates of produce – he turned out to be Santiago Cordón, the chef-owner and something of an evangelist for Navarran vegetables. Our multi-course tasting menu that day featured a sequence of elegantly prepared *verduras*: a carpaccio of zucchini with salty cheese, olive oil, sherry vinegar and radish; deep-red heirloom tomatoes with a mimosa of egg; a small clay pot covered with a delicate crust that, once broken, revealed tender borage stems in a light cream sauce. Grilled onion hearts followed; then a stew of *pochas* beans in ham broth; then seared light-green *cristal* peppers; then a single baked tomato stuffed with more minced peppers; and finally a small pastry crust filled with baked squash and eggplant and topped with raw egg yolk. The meal felt like an indulgence, not only for the number of courses but for the intricacy and sophistication of the preparations.

After the lunch rush, we talked to Cordón and his wife, Elena Pérez about his source of inspiration – the traditional walled vegetable allotment common among Tudelan families. Set on a bend in the Ebro at the edge of town, the plot, or *huerta*, has been in Cordón's family for generations and provides the restaurant's produce. Cordón proudly introduced us to his father, Manolo, who was hoeing weeds between the rows. We admired the raised beds, the crop rotations, the neat rows of organic vegetables. "I try to capture the essence of the vegetable right from the ground and not ruin it before it gets to the table," he said. While Cordón's methods might be called biodynamic or organic, to him they're simply family tradition. He worries that the younger generation of Spaniards will abandon this countryside for the big cities – but he admits that the ongoing economic crisis has stanched the flow of people leaving to find work.

After saying our goodbyes, we drove to our hotel just outside Tudela. On the other side of the Ebro, the landscape flattens and becomes more arid. Here, down a poorly marked side road, the Hotel Aire de Bardenas rises unexpectedly from the rocky, dusty earth – the border of the Bardenas Reales, one of the continent's largest deserts – like a modernist mirage. A grouping of 22 shipping-container- ▸

IF TUDELA IS OFF THE TOURIST TRACK, THEN BARDENAS REALES – A NATIONAL PARK AND A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE – FEELS LIKE THE SURFACE OF MARS



The ultra-modern Hotel Aire de Bardenas sits on the edge of one of Europe's largest deserts

like guest rooms and main buildings, the hotel is set between outlying farmland and a dirt road leading into the desert. It is the singular vision of owner Natalia Pérez Huerta and her architects, Emiliano López and Mónica Rivera – a local couple who had never before designed a hotel.

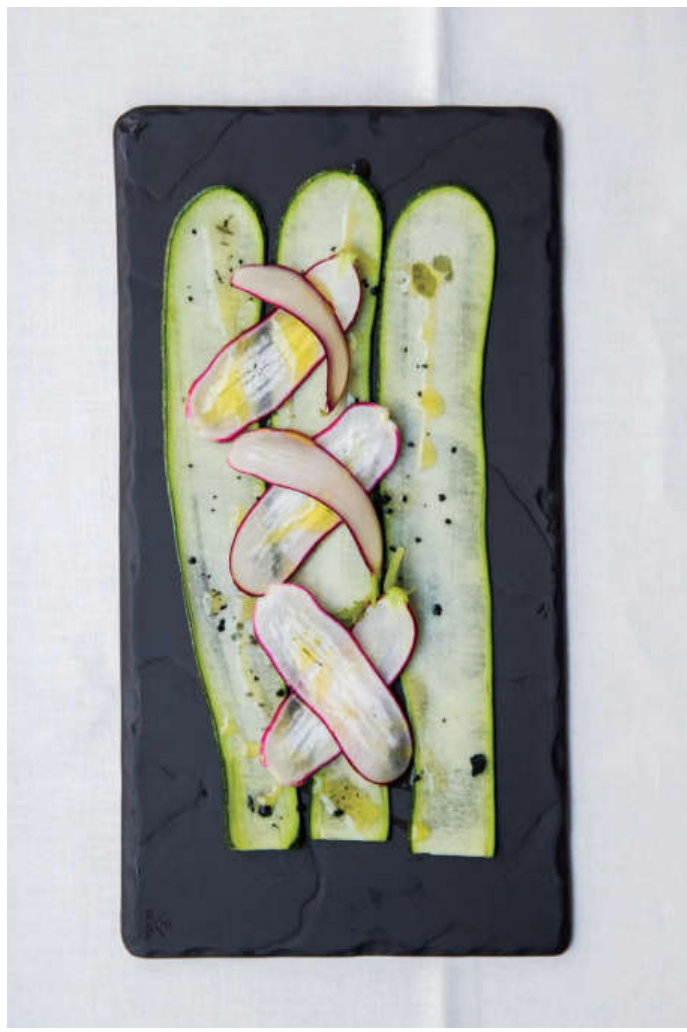
If Tudela is off the tourist track, then Bardenas Reales – a national park and a UNESCO World Heritage Site – feels like the surface of Mars. "It's not for everyone," says Pérez Huerta, who had a dream of owning a hotel inspired by places she'd seen only in photographs – modernist enclaves like Palm Springs and Marfa. And indeed, if you squint you can imagine yourself in the Sonoran Desert: the clean lines of the barricades surrounding the swimming pool, the organic garden, the cherry, fig and quince trees planted with Donald Judd-like precision, the giant white windmills spinning along the ridge just as they do in the American West. Navarra leads Europe in wind energy, and the winds here can indeed be fierce and lonely, eroding the chalky white soil and carving the rocks in the main part of the park into strange formations. Designated a biosphere reserve in 2000, it's a startling landscape – little wonder then that other Europeans (mainly French and Dutch bicycle tourists) are starting to visit for a dose of heat and sun.

THE NEXT DAY, WE DROVE IN A WIDE FIVE-HOUR loop through the Bardenas Reales, finding our way back to Tudela along flooded yellow rice fields, visiting ancient monasteries where the monks sell cakes and liqueurs. We detoured around villages, empty but for lavish funeral processions, and stopped to Instagram groves of poplars arranged in soldier-like rows. With each passing vignette, I was reminded of how disconcerting I found the diverse and eclectic landscapes of this ancient province – but beautifully so. Compared with the Moorish perfection of the Alhambra or the blissful Mediterranean-ness of Cadaqués, Navarra was more elusive, its charms more abstract, less obvious. I worried a little for Pérez Huerta and her chic white elephant of a hotel, as impressive as it was. I wanted to reassure her that although the locals may think it's bonkers, we get what she's trying to do. I wished Cordón continued success with his restaurant and hoped he'd find a protégé to continue his biodynamic endeavours. I found myself wanting to halt the progression of time, rooting for hilltop villages like Ujué and San Martín de Unx that seemed to teeter on the verge of dereliction – while equally hoping that they wouldn't turn into tourist traps.

Before we headed back to Madrid, we parked the car on the side of a ridge-top road and watched as, hundreds of feet below, barking collies herded sheep from one end of the pasture to another, the only other sound the wind through the oaks. There were no cars in sight, so we sat on the grassy verge with some Iberico ham, Roncal cheese, *piquillos* and sugared almonds, the air scented with oregano and crushed wild thyme. The golden walls of Ujué and its orchards were behind us, the sun setting behind the low purple Pyrenees before us. And at the moment the light disappeared, I made a quick wish that the next time I visited Navarra, I would still be able to recognise it.



Sheep are allowed to graze in a harvested broccoli field. **Right**: At Trinquete, a zucchini carpaccio on the tasting menu is topped with salty cheese, olive oil, a sherry vinegar reduction and a just-picked radish

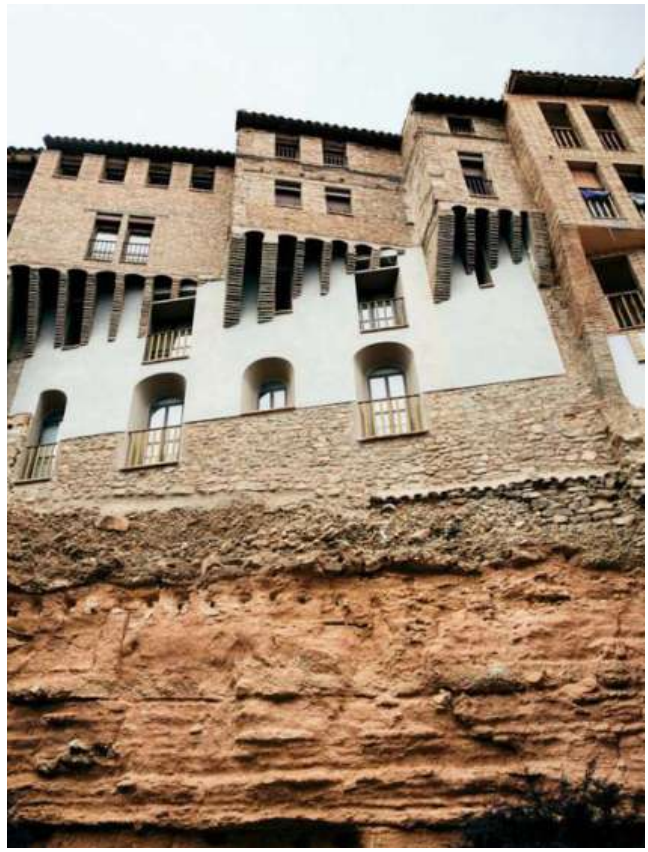




Stewed artichokes with a soft-cooked egg served alongside Tudelan lettuce hearts topped with anchovies at Bar José Luis

The narrow Gothic streets of Tudela









**Clockwise from top left**: *Minestra*, a traditional stew of spring vegetables topped with egg and Navarran white asparagus; medieval buildings perch on a rampart in the old quarter of Tarazona, in the Zaragoza Province; spring onions glazed with vinegar at Pichorradicas; the dining room at the Hotel Aire de Bardenas

# NEED TO KNOW: NAVARRA

SPAIN HAS ALWAYS BEEN KNOWN FOR ITS *JAMÓN, QUESO* AND *CROQUETAS*. BUT NAVARRA, A SPANISH FRIEND TOLD ME, IS RENOWNED FOR THE FRESHNESS AND QUALITY OF ITS PRODUCE

## WHERE TO EAT

**Café Iruña**
People-watch at this 19th-century café, a favourite of Ernest Hemingway's, while enjoying a morning *café con leche* and croissant *à la plancha* (open-face croissant toasted with marmalade and butter).
*Entrées from AED 25; 00349-4822 2064, cafeiruna.com*

**La Nuez**
Slightly outside Pamplona's tourist zone, this local favourite has an inventive menu of traditional Spanish specialities reimagined by its young owner.
*Entrées from AED 50; 00349-4822 8130, restaurantelanuez.com*

**La Olla**
Navarran comfort food such as stews and *pinxtos* (Basque bar snacks) in a warm, tavern-like dining room.
*Set menu from AED 100; 00349-4822 9558, laolla.com*

**Pichorradicas**
Tucked in a historic building next to the cathedral, this intimate restaurant prepares simple yet elegant Spanish dishes such as *bacalao* and pork augmented with locally grown vegetables.
*Set menu from AED 120; 00349-4882 1021, pichorradicas.es*

**Trinquete**
Devote a few hours to lunch at this influential Tudelan restaurant. The tasting menu of vegetables from the owner's family farm is excellent.
*Tasting menu from AED 120; 00349-4841 3105, trinquete.es*

## WHERE TO STAY

**Hotel Aire de Bardenas**
Modernist architecture and a dramatic setting on the edge of the Bardenas Reales desert make this hotel seem a world apart from Tudela, a 15-minute drive away.
*Doubles from AED 840; 00349-4811 6666, airedebardenas.com*

**Palacio Guendulain**
Pamplona's main sights can be seen in two days. This *grande dame* near the main square puts you in the centre of the city.
*Doubles from AED 520; 00349-4822 5522, palacioguendulain.com*

## WHAT TO SEE

**Bardenas Reales Natural Park**
At more than 100,000 acres, it's one of Europe's largest desert landscapes and a UNESCO-protected nature reserve enjoyed by hikers and bicyclists.
*00349-4882 0020, bardenasreales.es*

**Cathedral of Santa María**
This 13th-century cathedral is renowned for the lacy filigree of its French-Gothic cloister. A boxy modernist doorway leads from the sunny cloister to an ambitious permanent multimedia exhibition that catalogues the cathedral's large collection of artefacts. CNT

### *Getting there*
Emirates (*emirates.com*) and Qatar Airways (*qatarairways.com*) fly direct to Madrid from where it's a four-hour drive to Navarra



Santiago Cordón, chef-owner of Trinquete in Tudela, harvests fresh produce for his menu from the family *huerta*, which he tends with his father



A field of tender young Tudelan artichokes, famous throughout Spain

# Get the look

*Pack right for this month's destinations*



COACH A/W '15



DSQUARED2 A/W '15



## GEORGIA

Beanies, boots and fur-accented jackets are the practical choice when wandering through Georgia's picturesque mountain countryside













**1** Jacket, AED 12,450, **Alexander McQueen** **2** Gloves, AED 944, **Paule Ka** **3** Sleeveless sweater, AED 292, **Banana Republic** **4** Boots, AED 3,462, **Stuart Weitzman** **5** Watch, AED 32,800, **Fendi** **6** Skirt, AED 785, **Gerard Darel** **7** Bag, AED 10,898, **Christian Louboutin**

**1** Jacket, AED 28,120, **Lanvin** **2** Jeans, AED 950, **Diesel** **3** Beanie, AED 59, **H&M Studio** **4** Bracelet, AED 215, **Ted Baker** **5** Boots, AED 2,100, **Tod's** **6** Shirt, AED 245, **Massimo Dutti** **7** Bag, AED 2,369, **Tumi**




# ADELAIDE

Casually elegant separates in earthy tones complement the South Australian region that's embracing its roots and going back to nature

WORDS: RHEA SARAN; STYLE: ESTHER QUEK, SHELLY MISTRY; PHOTOS: CORBIS, ALAMY

**1** Bag, AED 2,100, **Aspinal of London** **2** Dress, AED 1,225, **Kitty Grace** at West LA **3** Sunglasses, AED 1,150, **Garrett Leight** at modaoperandi.com **4** Scarf, AED 1,320, **Kenzo** **5** Shoes, AED 2,000, **Santoni** **6** **MAC** Matte Lipstick in D for Danger, AED 104 **7** Watch, AED 1,075, **Tommy Hilfiger**

**1** Wallet, AED 840, **Dior Homme** **2** Sweater, AED 2,334, **Bottega Veneta** at mrporter.com **3** Belt, AED 1,090, **Bally** **4** **Davidoff** The Game Eau de Toilette, AED 325 **5** Bag, AED 80,186, **Ethan K** **6** Shoes, AED 1,456, **Hugo Boss** at mrporter.com **7** Chinos, AED 430, **Brooks Brothers**





# Where are you?

With a population of about 20,000 living in the scattered dwellings under domed grass roofs, this month's mystery destination is one of the largest villages built on a lake. The structures are supported by wooden stilts, slightly raised above the water's surface. Boats are the most important mode of transport here, whether it's getting to school, work or the shops. The history of this village can be traced back to the 16th and 17th centuries, when the original inhabitants settled here in an attempt to escape persecution from an opposing tribe which pillaged and sold natives into slavery. As that tribe's beliefs forbade its warriors to enter water, this peaceful lake became a safe haven for the community. The lagoon on which the village is situated is listed as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area by BirdLife International. Where are you?

## PRIZE

Email your answer identifying the village, lake and country where this photograph was taken to **contest@appgulf.com** and you could win a three-night stay for two at Six Senses Zighy Bay, Oman. See overleaf for details and look out for the answer in the December issue.

WORDS: PAULIN; PHOTO: CORBIS

# WIN A THREE-NIGHT STAY FOR TWO AT SIX SENSES ZIGHY BAY, OMAN

Set in a bay protected by the Hajar Mountains on Oman's northern Musandam Peninsula, Six Senses Zighy Bay is accessible by rocky roadway (just a two-hour drive from Dubai), by speedboat from a neighbouring port or, for the more adventurous, by paragliding into the resort.

The 82 village-inspired villas, made from local rock and natural materials, come with private infinity-edge pools, opulent furnishings and a Guest Experience Maker to cater to every need.

The Six Senses Spa is a haven of peace and tranquility, combining locally inspired treatments, Asian therapies and bathing rituals. Indulge with a traditional Moroccan hammam experience or welcome the day on the rooftop yoga platform.

Memorable dining experiences include fine dining with a view at the hillside Sense on the Edge and regional specialities at Spice Market and Shua Shack, which offers an authentic Bedouin experience.

The hotel can arrange diving excursions to see Oman's reefs, rock formations and colourful marine life; customised shopping trips and tours; and Arabic cooking classes. Meanwhile kids are entertained at Chaica's Club with sand-castle building on the 1.6km beach and treasure hunts, while teenagers enjoy adventure hikes and *wadi* swimming at the Al Feeteans' Club.

To win a three-night stay for two at Six Senses Zighy Bay in a Pool Villa including breakfast, a three-course dinner at Spice Market and a yoga class for two, correctly identify the location of this issue's **Where are you?** competition before October 31, 2015.

*Reservations are subject to availability. The prize is valid through October 31, 2016, is non-transferable, cannot be redeemed for cash, and does not include public holidays. Flights, transfers and all other expenses not stated in this prize are subject to payment either on consumption or departure. For more information call 00968-2673 5555 or visit sixsenses.com/zighybay*





**From top**: The Pool Villas come with a private infinity pool and natural stone walls for privacy; dining with a view at the hilltop Sense on the Edge restaurant

**WINNER: AUGUST 2015**

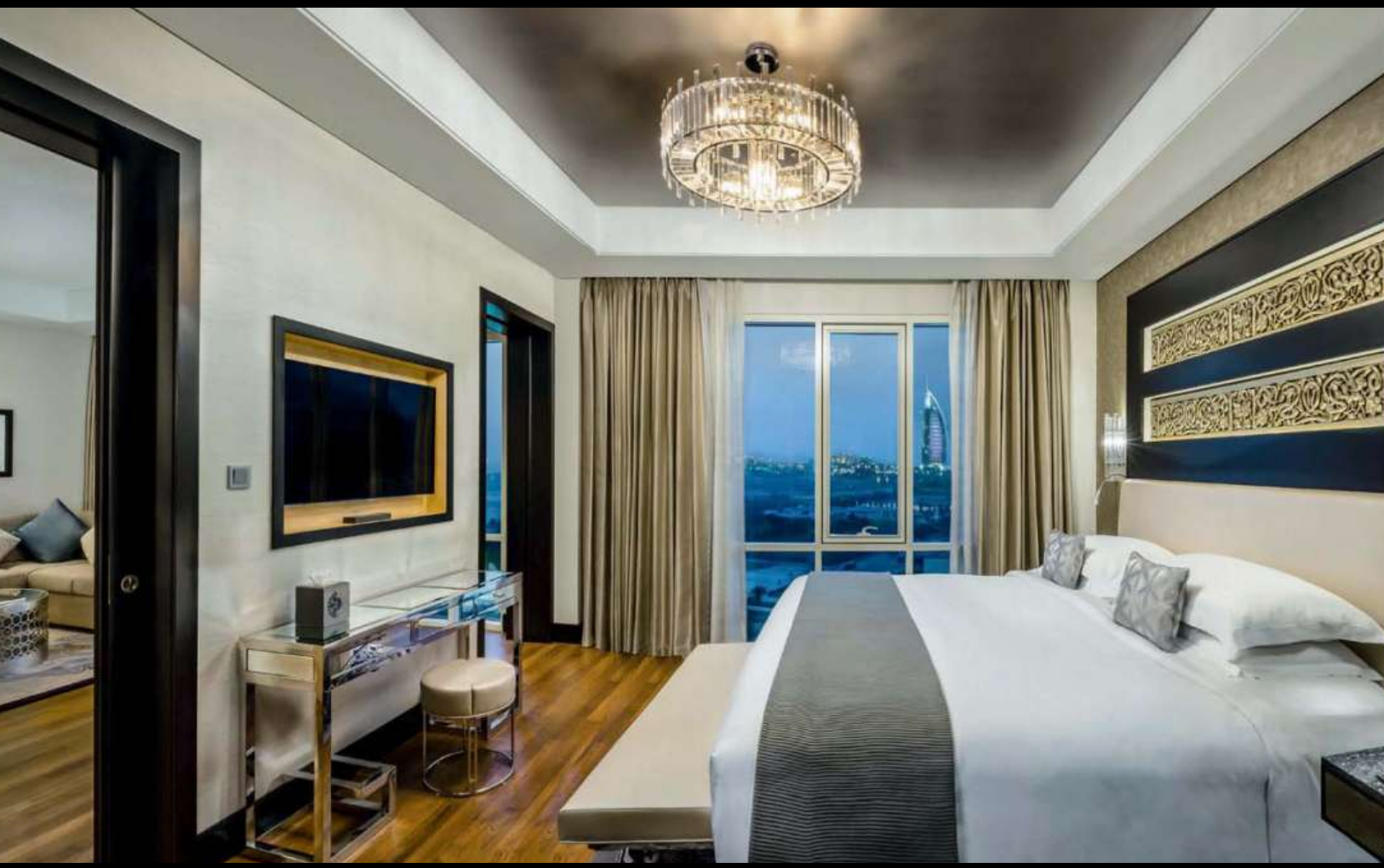
The winner of August's Where are you? competition is Richelle Wiley of Dubai who correctly identified the location in the picture as **Pumphouse Point, Lake St Clair, Australia**. She won a three-night stay for two at Sofitel Dubai Jumeirah Beach




**COMPETITION RULES 1.** Entries for *Condé Nast Traveller*'s Where are you? competition should be sent via email to: **contest@appgulf.com 2.** Winners will be judged at the discretion of *Condé Nast Traveller*. The decision of the judges will be final and binding. No correspondence will be entertained. Only one correct answer will be registered per entrant per issue. **3.** Each entry must arrive no later than October 31, 2015. Winners will be contacted by email or telephone whenever possible. **4.** The entries must be in English and complete in all respects. **5.** *Condé Nast Traveller* is not responsible for late entries. Illegible or mechanically produced entries are not eligible. Entries by text message are not eligible. **6.** Prizes will not be transferred or exchanged for cash or any other item. No refunds or credits for changes or cancellations are allowed. All other expenses and costs, which are not specified as being included in the prize, are the sole responsibility of the winner. **7.** All prizes must be redeemed prior to the expiry date. **8.** Taxes, if any, are the sole responsibility of the winner. **9.** The Where are you? competition is open to readers of *Condé Nast Traveller* aged 18 and over on the date of entry and who are ordinarily residents of the GCC. **10.** Employees of *Condé Nast Traveller* (Arab Publishing Partners), ITP, participating promotional agencies, contributors to *Condé Nast Traveller*, and the families of any of those above are not eligible to contest. **11.** All entries to the Where are you? competition become the sole property of *Condé Nast Traveller* and will not be acknowledged nor returned. **12.** Entries become the property of *Condé Nast Traveller* and may be used for such purpose and in such media as the company deems fit, without requiring the participant's prior permission. **13.** Acceptance of the prize constitutes consent for the use of the winner's name and likeness and those of his/her travelling companion for editorial, advertising and publicity purposes. **14.** *Condé Nast Traveller* will not be liable for any loss, damage or expense incurred by a prize winner or by his/her travelling companion (for example, costs of repatriation) as a consequence of any party participating in providing the prize becoming insolvent or entering into liquidation or bankruptcy. **15.** *Condé Nast Traveller* reserves the right to amend any or all of the terms of this contest, or the prizes on offer, at any time without prior notice. **16.** Contestants, by entering the competition, agree to be bound by the above rules, terms and conditions.

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# Review rules

*When leaving feedback about your experiences online, think before you type, says JENNY JOHNSON*



ILLUSTRATION: TOM FROESE

These days everyone's a critic, sharing their views with the world with a few taps on a keyboard and clicks of a mouse. But with that power comes responsibility, so it's important to express these views fairly and accurately. Our web experts reveal their top review etiquette tips.

## ALL ABOUT TIMING

While writing a scathing review after a particularly bad hotel or restaurant experience may seem justified at the time, it's a good idea to wait a day or two to reflect on the experience when emotions aren't running so high. "Don't be tempted to engage in review retaliation by making comments that could be deemed libellous or defamatory," says Joost Vermeulen, regional director, Middle East, at Booking.com. "Stick to your personal experience and try not to generalise." But while it's smart to give yourself time to think, don't wait too long. "Writing a review is best done while the trip is fresh in your mind, so you can remember the important details of your stay," says Elena Novokreshchenova, director of global content for Hotels.com. It also gives businesses an opportunity to make improvements sooner rather than later and helps other travellers who are more likely to be influenced by a recent review.

## THE PERFECT LENGTH

Short, two-word reviews like "Good location" or "Nice beach" may be to-the-point but don't really paint a picture for other globetrotters. According to Krista Canfield, Gogobot's getaway expert, the sweet spot for a review is between 100-500 characters. "Comment on specifics, and state why you do or don't like something, to help others decide if the place is right for them," she says. Conversely, don't write a novel as people may get bored and switch off.

## DEVIL'S IN THE DETAIL

When sharing your experiences online, whether it's about a hotel, restaurant, tour or flight, think about what you wish you had known before you travelled. "Start with the basics and cover the five Ws – on top of where you stayed, share who you were with, when you were there, what you did or experienced and why you would recommend it to other travellers," recommends Rebecca Southern, senior director of communications, EMEA and LATAM at TripAdvisor. "Add helpful details about what stood out, or consider including a tip to help others have a better experience, such as which rooms have the best views or any items off the restaurant menu you'd specifically recommend."

## CONTEXT IS KEY

Including personal details about yourself is not always relevant but in some cases it can give other travellers a better idea of your situation. "Offer some insight into the type of customer you are so readers have perspective," says Andrea Tarpey, head of communications at LateRooms. "For example, if you were staying in a hotel with your partner and small children, let it be known – this will help other potential guests understand your review in a context. The issues you experienced as a family might not pose a problem for a solo traveller or couple." Kelsey Blodget, executive editor at Oyster agrees. "Use personal information to illustrate a larger point about the hotel – if you want to share that you travelled with your two young children, explain what the hotel did (or didn't do) to accommodate them."

## DON'T GET PERSONAL

While giving recognition to certain staff members who went the extra mile is appreciated, it's best to avoid targeting someone in a negative way online. "Avoid singling out people by name, body shape, skin colour or gender – these can be considered personal attacks and be extremely distressing to those on the receiving end of the comments," warns Francesca Long, editor at Easyvoyage UK. It's also better to air any complaints at the time rather than bottling them up and waiting till it's too late. "Even if a member of staff was especially rude or unhelpful, outing them in your review isn't good etiquette," says Tarpey. "If you have a problem, flag it to the manager in person during your stay – that way the hotel has an opportunity to do something about it and make your stay better." Adds Mike Xenakis, managing director at OpenTable International, "If you had a specific issue with a restaurant staff member, do not use the review forum to make these grievances public as you give the restaurant no chance to rectify the situation and turn a bad experience into a good one."

## WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE

Being overly picky or ranting on review sites is a big turn-off, and reviews that are abusive or include swearing are a waste of time as most sites can't publish them. "It might seem obvious but often a valid opinion can go to waste because people feel offended by profanities and they discredit the review immediately," says Easyvoyage's Long.

## ILLUSTRATE YOUR POINT

A picture paints a thousand words and can also give people a taste of a place beyond the styled promo shots. "When you run out of words, include photos of well-crafted cocktails, serene spa spaces and comfortable-looking hotel accommodations to help tell the story," recommends Yelp's manager of business outreach, Corey Dane. It will also help you remember details you may have forgotten. "Adding pictures to your review reminds you not only of how good that *qwarmah al dajaj* tasted but also how it looked, how big of a portion it was and what other dishes were on the table at that time," explains Gogobot's Canfield. "Adding a photo of that kid-friendly waterpark helps you remember how hot it was once the afternoon sun came out – which may remind you to note in your review that it's not only cooler early in the morning but also that it was less crowded and that the queues were shorter." CNT

**'If you had a specific issue with a restaurant staff member, do not use the review forum to make these grievances public as you give the restaurant no chance to rectify the situation and turn a bad experience into a good one'**

# Have your say

*Travel review sites to keep on the roster*

**TRIPADVISOR**
The travel giant has more than 200 million reviews on its site and allows users to leave feedback anonymously but uses sophisticated software to ensure authenticity. Travel companies are then rated based on feedback.
*tripadvisor.com*

**BOOKING.COM**
The leading hotel reservation site, Booking.com features over 80,000 properties with photos, descriptions and user-generated reviews, and guarantees guests the best available room rates.
*booking.com*

**HOTELS.COM**
Part of the Expedia group, this popular accommodation booking site offers more than 240,000 hotels, B&Bs and serviced apartments around the world and features over 11 million authenticated reviews.
*hotels.com*

**GOGOBOT**
With more than 900,000 reviews, four million photos and 60,000 city guides available on both the site and its apps, Gogobot's mission is to help people discover great places to stay, eat and play, suited specifically to them.
*gogobot.com*

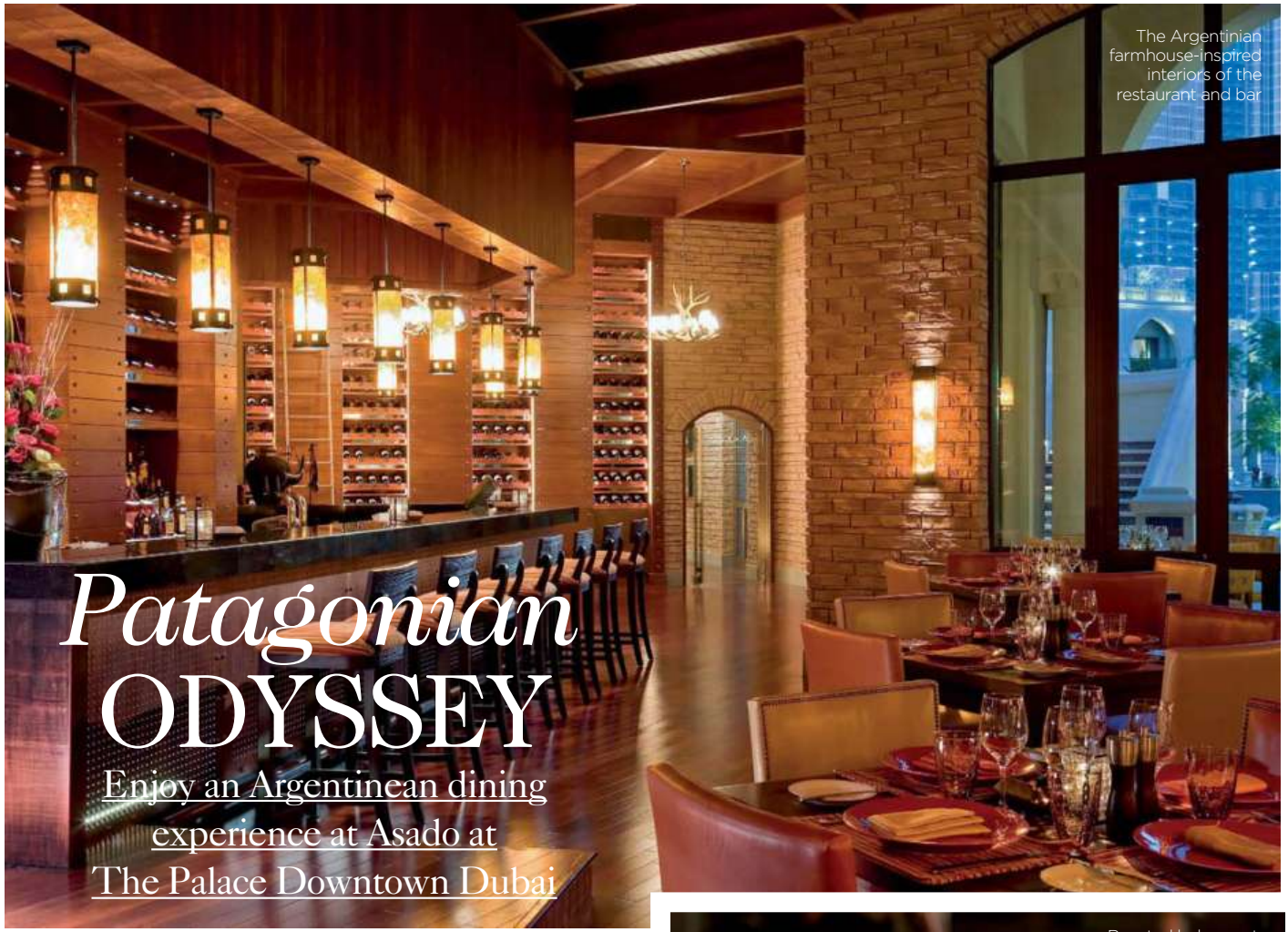
**LATEROOMS**
Started as a last-minute booking site, LateRooms now allows guests to reserve rooms up to a year in advance and includes 1.4 million genuine guest reviews.
*laterooms.com*

**OYSTER**
An expert review site with thousands of hotels across more than 200 cities offering honest feedback from their investigators and journalists as well as a hotel comparison function.
*oyster.com*

**EASYVOYAGE**
A holiday and flight comparison site with a mix of editorial content, forums and reviews by users and journalists.
*easyvoyage.co.uk*

**OPENTABLE**
This real-time restaurant-reservation portal receives more than 450,000 restaurant reviews every month for over 32,000 eateries around the world.
*opentable.com*

**YELP**
Connects people with local businesses like restaurants, shops and nightlife. Yelpers have written more than 83 million reviews.
*yelp.com*



The Argentinian farmhouse-inspired interiors of the restaurant and bar

# *Patagonian* ODYSSEY

## Enjoy an Argentinean dining experience at Asado at The Palace Downtown Dubai



A dessert of churros with chocolate



Roasted baby goat, cooked on the Asador open fire grill

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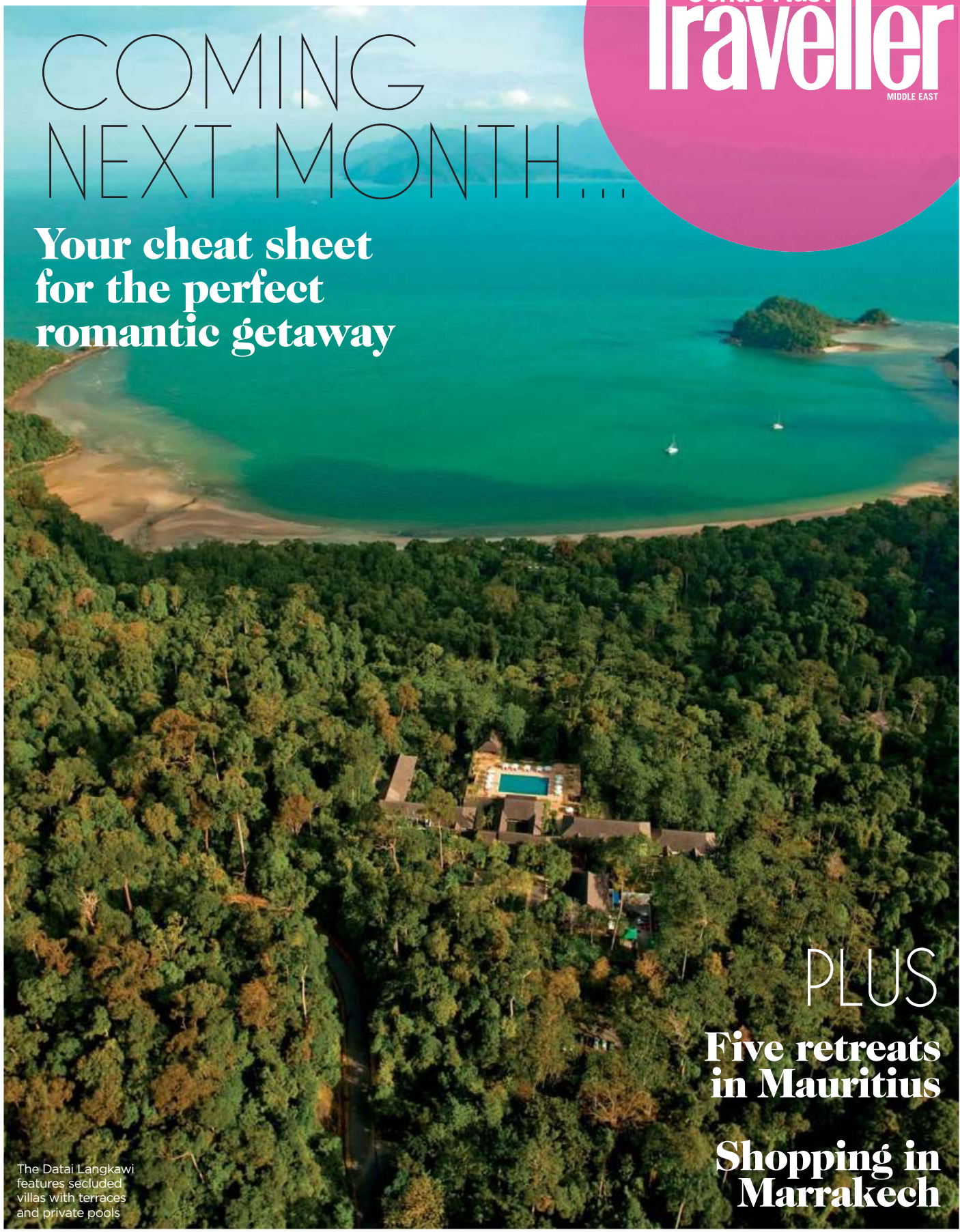
Budding home chefs can also master the art of Argentine cooking under the expert guidance of chef Gabriel Stivala. The educational culinary experience includes the class, followed by a three-course meal with a premium cocktail or soft beverage.

*For more information call 00971-4-888 3444 or visit theaddress.com*

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## FASHION

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**Alexander McQueen** Dubai, 00971-4-339 8760; Doha, 00974-4-495 3876; Kuwait City, 00965-2-575 7739
**Aspinal of London** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-632 7613; Kuwait, 00965-2-220 0740
**Bally** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-667 5199; Dubai, 00971-4-251 4832; Kuwait City, 00965-2-530 9525; Riyadh, 00966-11-462 6542
**Banana Republic** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-443 7006; Dubai, 00971-4-339 8462; Doha, 00974-4-450 7965; Kuwait City, 00965-2-259 7328; Jeddah, 00966-12-612 2968; Riyadh, 00966-11-207 7811
**Bottega Venetta** at Mr Porter: mrporter.com
**Brooks Brothers** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-565 1947; Dubai, 00971-4-295 0159
**Burberry** at Stylebop: stylebop.com
**Christian Louboutin** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-412 4030; Dubai, 00971-4-325 3935; Doha, 00974-4-450 7004; Manama, 00973-1-717 8076; Kuwait City, 00965-2-297 9011; Jeddah, 00966-12-261 0304; Riyadh, 00966-11-211 2819
**Diesel** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-626 6486; Dubai, 00971-4-339 8615; Doha, 00974-4-495 3876; Manama, 00973-1-717 8080; Kuwait City, 00965-2-530 9727; Jeddah, 00966-12-606 2286; Riyadh, 00966-11-281 4502
**Dior** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-681 7477; Dubai, 00971-4-330 8739; Doha, 00974-4-413 4665; Manama, 00973-1-753 4160; Kuwait City, 00965-2-297 9021; Riyadh, 00966-11-211 2452
**dunhill** Dubai, 00971-4-434 0403; Doha, 00974-4-413 4788; Manama, 00973-1-758 1999; Kuwait City, 00965-2-249 8611; Riyadh, 00966-11-810 2632
**Ethan K** ethan-k.com
**Gerard Darel** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-681 3350; Dubai, 00971-4-339 9780; Kuwait City, 00965-2-259-7500 ext 7060
**Garrett Leight** at Moda Operandi: modaoperandi.com
**Giorgio Armani** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-443 7213; Dubai, 00971-4-339 8121; Doha, 00974-4-495 3876; Manama, 00973-1-758 1166; Kuwait City, 00965-2-220 0516; Jeddah, 00966-2-664 0703; Riyadh, 00966-1-466 4703
**Givenchy** at Matches Fashion: matchesfashion.com
**Gucci** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-681 6844; Dubai, 00971-4-341 0669; Doha, 00974-4-413 4612; Kuwait City, 00965-2-530 9997; Jeddah, 00966-12-668 7034; Riyadh, 00966-11-211 2627
**H&M** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-695 8180; Dubai, 00971-4-315 3681; Muscat, 00968-2447 0570; Doha, 00974-4-450 7330; Manama, 00973-1-756 4606; Kuwait City, 00965-2-228 3057; Jeddah, 00966-12-612 3594; Riyadh, 00966-56-135 4004
**Hugo Boss** at Mr Porter: mrporter.com
**Incotex** at Mr Porter: mrporter.com
**Kenzo** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-644 3042; Dubai, 00971-4-330 8455; Doha, 00974-4-437 5796; Manama, 00973-1-332 0550; Kuwait City, 00965-2-259 7500 ext 7050; Jeddah, 00966-2-211 2362; Riyadh, 00966-11-211 2361
**Kitty Grace** at West LA: Dubai, 00971-4-394 4248
**Lanvin** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-677 1180; Dubai, 00971-4-330 8008; Kuwait City, 00965-2-220 0590; Jeddah, 00966-12-661 2812; Riyadh, 00966-11-288 5455
**Loewe** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-412 4015; Dubai, 00971-4-325 3754; Doha, 00974-4-450 7356; Riyadh, 00966-11-211 2709
**Massimo Dutti** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-645 2377; Dubai, 00971-4-339 9070; Doha, 00974-4-487 6860; Manama, 00973-1-717 2325; Kuwait City, 00965-2-224 4544; Jeddah, 00966-2-612 3137; Riyadh, 00966-56-909 7770
**Michael Kors** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-412 4070; Dubai, 00971-4-395 1694; Manama, 973-1-711 2724; Kuwait City, 00965-2-259 7805; Jeddah, 00966-12-275 3887; Riyadh, 00966-11-273 4911
**Mochi** allthingsmochi.com
**Paul Smith** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-412 4000; Dubai, 00971-4-395 1410; Doha, 00974-4-407 7153; Manama, 00973-1-717 9564; Kuwait City, 00965-2-259 7801; Jeddah, 00966-12-275 4632
**Paule Ka** Dubai, 00971-4-325 3225; Kuwait City, 00965-2-259 7737
**Ralph Lauren** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-626 6734; Dubai, 00971-4-330 8005; Doha, 00974-4-451 7057; Manama, 00973-1-711 2720; Kuwait City, 00965-2-220 0631; Jeddah, 00966-12-211 2513; Riyadh, 00966-11-211 2513
**Saint Laurent by Hedi Slimane** Dubai, 00971-4-501 6645; Doha, 00974-4-407 7151; Manama, 00973-1-758 8025
**Santoni** at Level Shoe District: Dubai, 00971-4-501 6939
**Stuart Weitzman** Dubai, 00971-4-501 6645; Doha, 00974-4-407 7151; Manama, 00973-1-758 8025
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**Tumi** Dubai, 00971-4-339 8536; Jeddah, 00966-12-275 4676; Kuwait City, 00965-2-220 0596
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**Vilebrequin** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-644 5696; Dubai, 00971-4-392 7456; Kuwait City, 00965-2-220 0548

## BEAUTY

**Aesop** at Mr Porter: mrporter.com
**Benefit** at Sephora: Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-445 3690; Dubai, 00971-4-339 9828; Doha, 00974-4-450 7345; Manama, 00973-1-717 9521; Kuwait City, 00965-2-259 7769; Jeddah, 00966-12-215 0496; Riyadh, 00966-11-207 8075
**Chanel** at Harvey Nichols: Dubai, 00971-4-409 8888; Kuwait City, 00965-2-228 3008; Riyadh, 00966-11-273 4444
**Charlotte Tilbury** at Net-A-Porter: net-a-porter.com
**Clinique** at Harvey Nichols: Dubai, 00971-4-409 8888; Kuwait City, 00965-2-228 3008; Riyadh, 00966-11-273 4444
**Davidoff** at Areej: Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-443 7055; Dubai, 00971-4-340 5223; Muscat, 00968-24-55 8752
**Dior** at Harvey Nichols: Dubai, 00971-4-409 8888; Kuwait City, 00965-2-228 3008; Riyadh, 00966-11-273 4444
**MAC** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-695 8229; Dubai, 00971-4-419 0422; Muscat, 00968-24-47 0581; Doha, 00974-4-413 5069; Manama, 00973-1-758 2757; Kuwait City, 00965-2-224 4706; Jeddah, 00966-12-215 0408; Riyadh, 00966-11-211 2597
**NARS** at Sephora: Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-445 3690; Dubai, 00971-4-339 9828; Doha, 00974-4-450 7345; Manama, 00973-1-717 9521; Kuwait City, 00965-2-259 7769; Jeddah, 00966-12-215 0496; Riyadh, 00966-11-207 8075
**Smashbox** at Sephora: Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-445 3690; Dubai, 00971-4-339 9828; Doha, 00974-4-450 7345; Manama, 00973-1-717 9521; Kuwait City, 00965-2-259 7769; Jeddah, 00966-12-215 0496; Riyadh, 00966-11-207 8075
**Tom Ford** at Harvey Nichols: Dubai, 00971-4-409 8888; Kuwait City, 00965-2-228 3008; Riyadh, 00966-11-273 4444

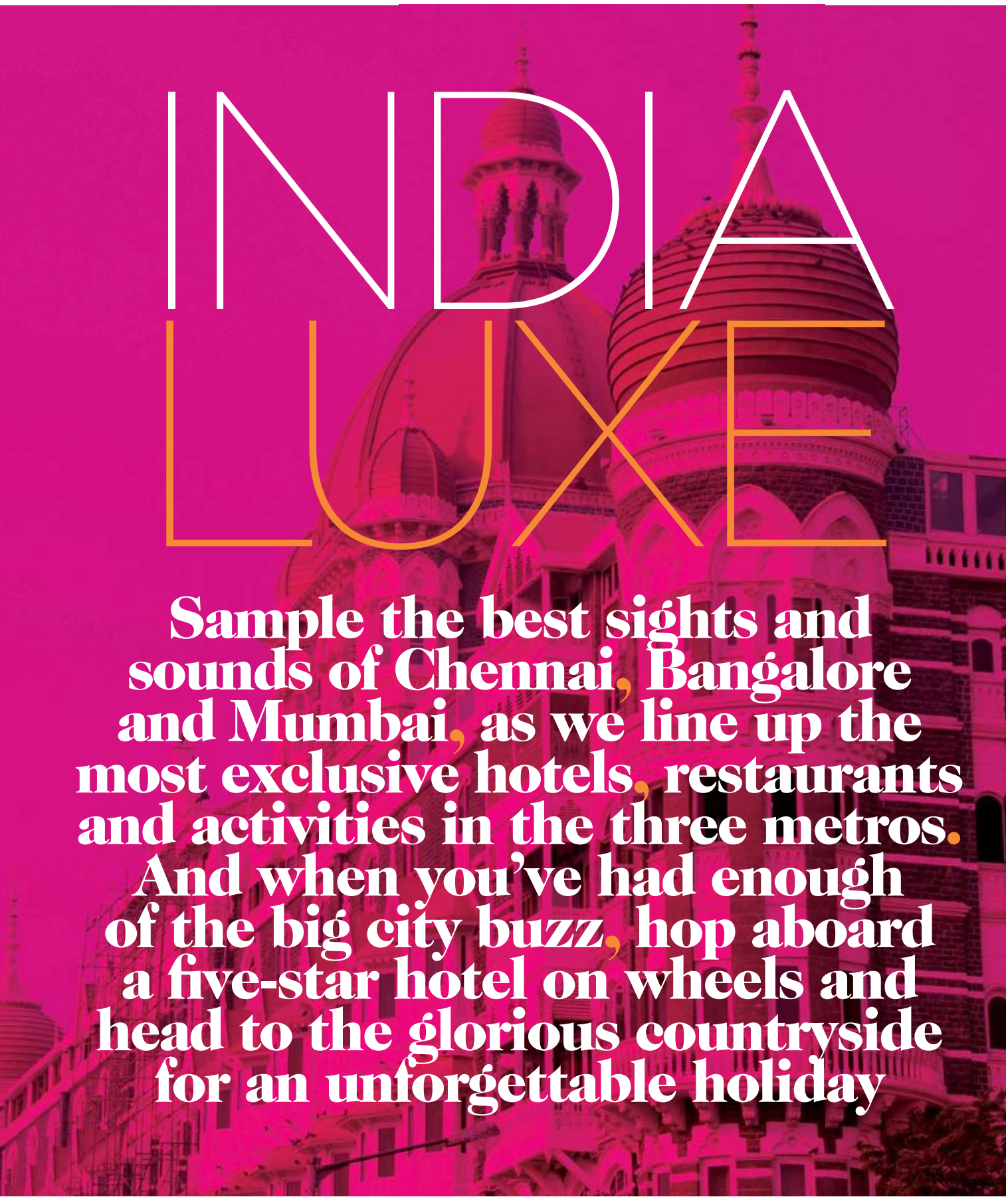
## WATCHES AND JEWELLERY

**Breguet** at Rivoli: Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-681 3035; Dubai, 00971-4-341 3121; Muscat, 00968-2-455 8290; Doha, 00974-4-479 0107
**Brumani** at Damas: Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-681 3770; Dubai, 00971-4-347 9663; Muscat, 00968-26-81 0524; Doha, 00974-4-467 8828; Manama, 00973-1-755 6013; Kuwait City, 00965-2-220 0768; Jeddah, 00966-12-612 2677; Riyadh, 00966-11-403 4658
**Fendi** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-681 3553; Dubai, 00971-4-339 9782; Doha, 00974-4-460 0945; Manama, 00973-1-332 0505; Jeddah, 00966-12-284 2803; Riyadh, 00966-11-462 6098
**Harry Winston** at Rivoli: Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-681 3035; Dubai, 00971-4-341 3121; Muscat, 00968-2-455 8290; Doha, 00974-4-479 0107
**IWC Schaffhausen** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-681 1557; Dubai, 00971-4-339 8111; Kuwait City, 00965-2-530 9870
**Jaeger-LeCoultre** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-681 2834; Dubai, 00971-4-339 8769; Kuwait City, 00965-2-530 9871; Riyadh, 00966-11-463 4743
**Ted Baker** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-681 4711; Dubai, 00971-4-434 0623; Kuwait City, 00965-2-530 9979; Riyadh, 00966-11-249 2235
**Tommy Hilfiger** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-645 9927; Dubai, 00971-4-339 8097; Muscat, 00968-24-55 2160; Doha, 00974-7-787 3203; Manama, 00973-1-717 9306; Kuwait City, 00965-9-794 7934; Jeddah, 00966-12-215 0641; Riyadh, 00966-11-216 1080
**Van Cleef & Arpels** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-643 2088; Dubai, 00971-4-339 8001; Doha, 00974-4-416 9399; Jeddah, 00966-12-284 1481; Riyadh, 00966-11-465 2662

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Brunello Cucinelli** brunellocucinelli.com
**Etro** Dubai, 00971-4-330 8774; Doha, 00974-4-495 3876 ext 1981; Manama, 00973-1-717 8459; Kuwait City, 00965-2-565 6483; Jeddah, 00966-12-215 0884; Riyadh, 00966-11-211 1060
**Louis Vuitton** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-681 2166; Dubai, 00971-4-330 8060; Doha, 00974-4-413 4931; Manama, 00973-1-753 7543; Kuwait City, 00965-2-220 0522; Riyadh, 00966-11-211 2705
**Nespresso** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-650 9950; Dubai, 00971-4-339 9092; Doha, 00974-800 0888; Manama, 00973-1-718 0570; Kuwait City, 00965-2 492 2600
**Prada** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-491 9287; Dubai, 00971-4-501 6990; Doha, 00974-4-464 4908; Kuwait City, 00965-2-530 9782; Jeddah, 00966-12-660 6699 ext 6005; Riyadh, 00966-11-416 8978
**Samsonite** Abu Dhabi, 00971-2-645 6465; Dubai, 00971-4-339 8690; Muscat, 00968-24-55 8110; Doha, 00974-4-469 0895; Manama, 00973-1-717 9657; Kuwait City, 00965-2-259 7729; Jeddah, 00966-12-211052; Riyadh, 00966-11-211 3277
**Tumi** Dubai, 00971-4-339 8536; Jeddah, 00966-12-275 4676; Kuwait City, 00965-2-220 0596


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# INDIA LUXE

**Sample the best sights and sounds of Chennai, Bangalore and Mumbai, as we line up the most exclusive hotels, restaurants and activities in the three metros. And when you've had enough of the big city buzz, hop aboard a five-star hotel on wheels and head to the glorious countryside for an unforgettable holiday**



The Taj Mahal Palace is located on the waterfront, beside the Gateway of India

# MUMBAI

The big, busy city is a heady mix of high energy and laid-back cool. Home to Bollywood and business, the capital of Maharashtra is a one-stop destination for all things trendy in India – whether you like glamour or prefer to be underground, it will be almost impossible to resist the many charms of Mumbai.

## WHERE TO EAT

### The Table

The warm buzz of this tiny restaurant in Colaba wins you from the start, as jazz and mood lighting set the tone for an intimate evening. The menu is innovative, with delectable dishes like zucchini spaghetti sitting side by side with comfort foods like truffle scrambled egg on toast. The selection is divided into small and large plates and we suggest you order several small plates to get a good sample. Don't leave without tasting the *pain perdu* with a side of caramelised bananas. Simply divine.
*0091-22-2282 5001, thetable.in*

### The Bombay Canteen

A collaboration between master chef Floyd Cardoz and well-known Indian chef Thomas Zacharias, this cheerful Indian café and bar in Lower Parel is the latest addition to the city's much-talked-about restaurants. From traditional *nargisi kofte* to more modern seafood *bhel*, everyone's talking about The Bombay Canteen and its quirks such as the *baarish ka* menu for rainy days, full of *bhajis* and *pakodas*.
*0091-22-4966 6666, thebombaycanteen.com*

### Ellipsis

The ambience is magnetic and the menu changes daily, so you get recipes made only from the freshest produce. Located in Colaba, Ellipsis is the epitome of understated cool with lots of artworks amid clean lines. The food is hearty with omelettes and burgers, pastas and grills, as well as a big Sunday brunch spread that we recommend. Go in a large group and try everything.
*0091-22-6621 3333, ellipsisrestaurant.com*

## WHERE TO DRINK

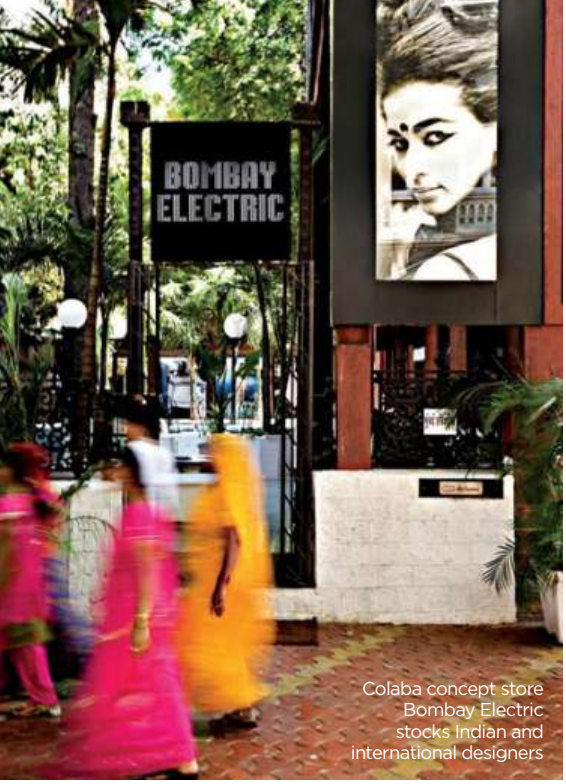
### Aer

It's on the 34th floor, is open-air, faces the Arabian Sea and is swanky as hell – the more you go, the more you want to return. Located at the Four Seasons Mumbai, get there early to grab a sea-view table and watch the sun go down as you sip your poison to the buzz of happy people surround you. As the light fades, move over to the other side and watch the twinkling lights of Mumbai. It's a magical atmosphere all around and the rather pricey drinks are well made and worth the splurge.
*0091-22-2481 8444, fourseasons.com/mumbai*

### Gadda Da Vida

What's better than a fabulous view of the sea? Why, sitting right next to it of course. Part of the otherwise ordinary Novotel hotel, this old-favourite Juhu nightclub never fails to deliver with mellow music and seating right on the beach. The food's good, the drinks are well mixed and the waves can be heard crashing right into the night. This is a place to arrive at 5pm and park yourselves till you are unceremoniously thrown out.
*0091-22-6693 4444, novotelmumbai.com/restaurants-bars*

WORDS: KALYANI PRASHER



Colaba concept store Bombay Electric stocks Indian and international designers


Enjoy sundowners at Aer at the Four Seasons Mumbai

**Kipling Bar**
One half of The Sahib Room & Kipling Bar at The St. Regis Mumbai in Lower Parel, this one is for the old-world romantic. The colonial charm starts from the name and carries through in the décor with old photographs, an LP player, books and elaborate chandeliers. The Kipling Bar is actually the ante room of this Indian restaurant, ideal for a quiet drink with someone with whom you would actually want to converse. Your cocktail might come with an Indian herb or two.
*0091-22-6162 8444, starwoodhotels.com/stregis*

## WHAT TO SEE

**Take a walk**
To truly understand the heritage of Mumbai and to marvel at some of its most iconic Art Deco buildings, sign up for a guided walk with an expert who can regale you with history, architecture as well as a funny secret or two. Bombay Heritage Walks (*bombayheritagewalks.com*) offers tours around the Fort area buildings, in beautiful old churches and synagogues, which let you relive Mumbai's rich cultural history.

**Attend a small concert**
Witness the city's burgeoning underground music scene. Blue Frog (*bluefrog.co.in*) remains the best live venue in Mumbai with some fantastic indie groups and other popular acts. If you are a music lover, this lovely little set-up in Lower Parel will have something that catches your fancy. Another great place for live gigs is Live from the Console in Mehboob Studio, Bandra, which is a platform for younger and alternative artists to come together and do something special.

## WHERE TO SHOP

**Bombay Electric**
This popular concept store in Colaba is known as the Barneys of Mumbai. You can always find something interesting by top Indian designers such as Rajesh Pratap Singh as well as international fashion and jewellery labels.
*bombayelectric.in*

**Bandra**
The small boutiques in the bylanes of Bandra West are best explored when you have plenty of time – each day a new store opens up with its own quirks and you never know what you might find. Matcha scrubs? Avocado soap? Yoga mats? Bollywood posters? Anything is possible.

**Le Mill**
It has been compared to Colette, with its mix of high fashion and high quirk. Find labels like Isabel Marant and Acne, as well as Kashmiri shawls, designer candles, bags and a host of other shiny, beautiful things. It's a mixed bag and it's delightful.
*lemillindia.com*

## WHERE TO STAY

**Taj Mahal Palace**
The most iconic hotel in Mumbai, which has played host to royalty, heads of state and celebrities over the years. The property remains a favourite with several great restaurants and a dome towering over Colaba.
*tajhotels.com*

**JW Marriott Mumbai Juhu**
The JW Marriott is a great place to stay if you want to be close to the food and shopping hubs of Bandra and Andheri – not to mention Juhu's own lovely restaurants including local seafood institution Mahesh Lunch Home. The hotel's large coffee shop is a favourite meeting place for Bollywood A-listers who live nearby.
*marriott.com*

**The Oberoi, Mumbai**
Make a date with a long tradition of hospitality as you check in to this contemporary waterfront property in Nariman Point. The in-house spa is considered one of the city's best.
*oberoihotels.com/hotels-in-mumbai*

## SHORT TRIP

**MATHERAN**
When you're in the thick of things in Mumbai, escaping to the quiet greenery of Matheran in the Western Ghats is a welcome break. Run away for a night to the lovely Verandah in the Forest, located amid thick woods, where the only sound you'll hear will be birdsong. Restore your senses with long walks and a lazy breakfast before you return to the daily grind.
*Two and a half hours by road to Dasturi, the car park 4.5km from the hotel, after which you can walk or can ask the hotel to arrange for a horse ride.*
*0091-21-4823 0810, the-verandah-in-the-forest.neemranahotels.com*

Incredible India

# *Responsible* LUXURY

## Discover the iconic cultural and historic sights of regal India with ITC Hotels



The pool at ITC Grand Bharat in Gurgaon. **Below:** Relax at the regal ITC Rajputana in Jaipur

It's a country of great beauty, history and diversity, and now visitors can experience India's treasures with an exclusive sojourn to the Golden Triangle with premier Indian hospitality brand ITC Hotels, in association with Starwood's The Luxury Collection. The curated itinerary invites guests to explore India's opulent palaces, gastronomic delights, vibrant bazaars and award-winning wellness experiences whilst staying at an array of exquisite properties, each distinctively capturing the essence of its location. And with the largest number of LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum Certified hotels, ITC Hotels is recognised as the greenest luxury hotel chain in the world.

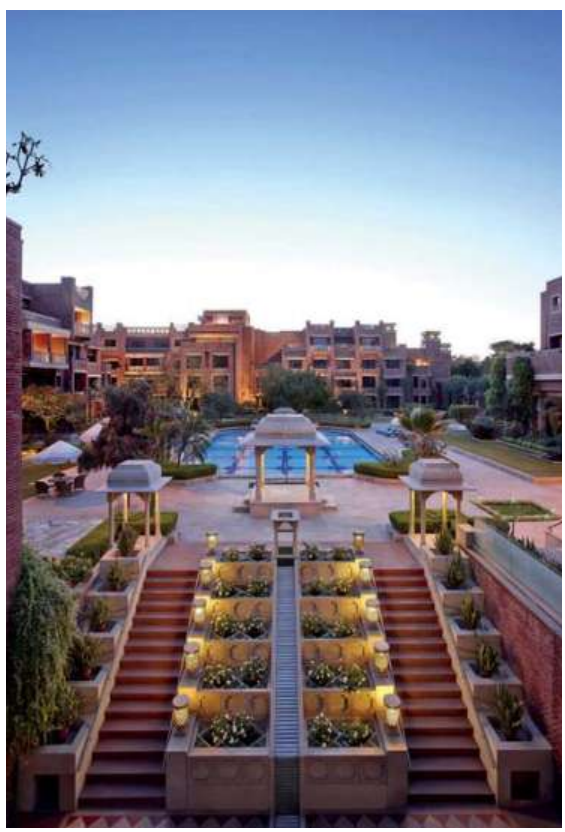
The journey begins in New Delhi, with the invigorating sights and sounds of the capital city. Escape to the ITC Maurya, a favourite among royalty and heads of state, featuring décor inspired by the historic Mauryan dynasty. Savour the culinary delights of authentic Indian cuisine at the hotel's premier dining destinations, Bukhara and Dum Pukht.

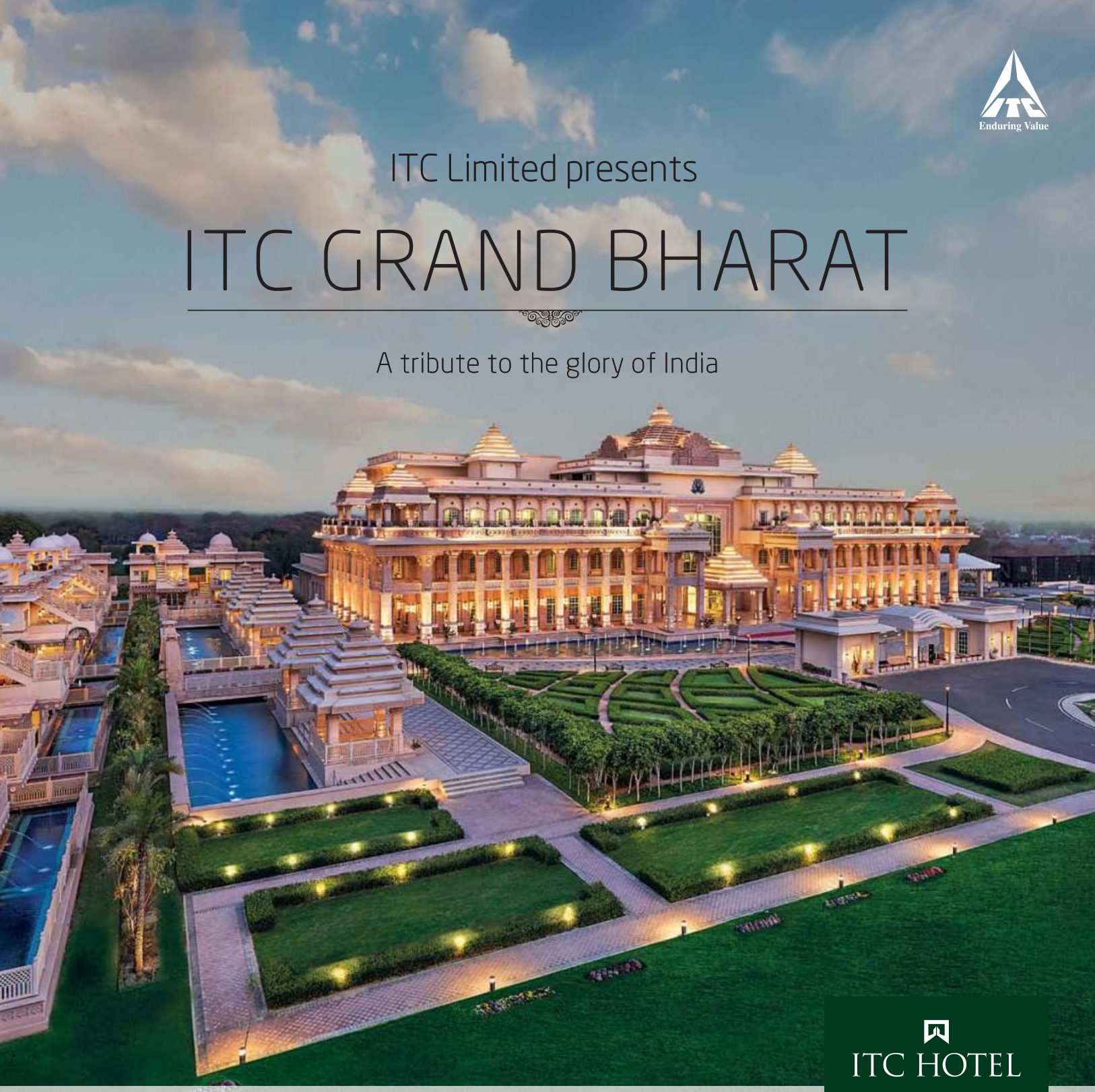
The next stop is Agra, home of the majestic Taj Mahal. Experience a regal reception at the award-winning ITC Mughal and revitalise at Kaya Kalp - the Royal Spa. Enjoy wellness treatments like the Passage to India, rooted in the ancient traditions of Ayurveda, and the Exotic Pomegranate, an antioxidant exfoliation and massage, all in a setting resplendent with scarlet and gold hues, stone latticework and mother-of-pearl inlay.

Continue on to Jaipur, the Pink City, renowned for its refined artistry and craftsmanship. Relax by the ITC Rajputana's sapphire swimming pool at the heart of a property designed as a regal take on traditional *havelis* and courtyards.

The voyage concludes at the ITC Grand Bharat in Gurgaon, pegged as India's first luxury all-suite retreat. Nestled in a tranquil setting, there's plenty to do, with a range of fine dining restaurants, a royal spa, banqueting facilities, and a signature 27-hole golf course designed by legendary golfer Jack Nicklaus.

*For more information visit itchotels.in/luxury-sojourns*






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For details and reservations, call ITC Grand Bharat at +91-1267-285500 or 1800-102-2333 or visit: www.itchotels.in or contact your travel agent.

JWT.5612.2015



The Chennai Anna Memorial is an iconic landmark of the city



Get around Chennai by auto rickshaw

# CHENNAI

India's cultural capital as well as the land of filter *kaapi* (coffee), Chennai, the capital of Tamil Nadu, used to be somewhere you came to ease the pace of life – until the bars of the city got kicking. With hotels being allowed to run their clubs into the wee hours now, there's always a party to be had in this seaside city. From hole-in-the-wall bookshops to snazzy rooftop bars, there's a lot of the good life to be found in Chennai.

## WHERE TO EAT

**Kefi**

For some reason there are more Taj hotels in Chennai than you can count on one hand – three within walking distance of each other. The youngest, Taj Club House Hotel on Club House Road, is home to the chic rooftop Mediterranean restaurant Kefi. When it opened a few years ago, the-restaurant got such rave reviews that the whole country heard about its fab food and Lebanese chef. The romantic décor, all white gazebos and dim candle-like lighting, makes this a popular date-night spot. Open for dinner only, relax in the gentle and constant sea breeze with delicacies from Turkey, Spain, Morocco, Greece and Lebanon, including tasty couscous dishes.
*0091-44-6631 3131, tajhotels.com*

**Beyond Madras at the Dining Room**

A glittering addition to the city's fine-dining line-up, Beyond Madras is a South Indian restaurant that offers traditional home recipes. Think simple and delicious braised lamb with chillies; fish in a coconut milk reduction; *appam* and stew; and *dosas*. There's a caramel custard made with cane sugar that's to-die-for and try the fresh catch of the day cooked with green mango, the house speciality. The décor is as traditional as the menu, with a *kollam* at the door decorated with fresh jasmine flowers.
*0091-44-7177 1234, chennai.park.hyatt.com*

WORDS: KALYANI PRASHER



The regal interiors of vegetarian restaurant Royal Vega at ITC Grand Chola

**Royal Vega**
An all-vegetarian restaurant might not sound very adventurous but the concept is interesting enough to make it worth a try. In the brand new ITC Grand Chola, this new place offers vegetarian recipes from the royal kitchens of India. With hearty dishes such as the Kashmiri *palak chaaman* (paneer in spinach) and the Punjabi *alu vadiyan* (potatoes tossed with lentil balls) alongside fascinating delicacies like *gucci basmati*, a morel and rice patty fried and wrapped in gold leaf, it's nothing if not exotic. Give it a try for a royal treat.
*0091-44-2220 0000, itchotels.in/hotels/itcgrandchola*

## WHERE TO DRINK

**The Flying Elephant**
In the day it's a fine-dining multi-cuisine restaurant but at night the Park Hyatt's Flying Elephant turns into the bustling nightlife venue favoured by the city's slick set. A split-level, stylish space designed by George Wong, the two bars here serve anything that you need to lift your spirits. Currently celebrating Oktoberfest, you can enjoy a great range of international hops this month.
*0091-44-7177 1234, chennai.park.hyatt.com*

**Library Blu**
For something more sedate and less noisy, the elegantly appointed and relaxed bar at The Leela Palace is an ideal space at which to relax with a glass of fine red. Catch up with friends or just unwind after a hectic day out on town at this serene waterhole where you can find the best French grape as well as an impressive range of aged spirits.
*0091-44-3366 1234, theleela.com*

## WHAT TO SEE

**Do a spice walk**
Trawl the markets of Madras for fragrant spices like cardamom and cinnamon, ginger and turmeric, and then cook up a storm with freshly procured vegetables for a memorable afternoon – it's all part of a bespoke walking itinerary with Story Trails.
*storytrails.in*

**Visit Dakshina Chitra**
Located on the scenic East Coast Road, the 10 acres of this lovely space showcase different architectural styles of southern India. It's a living and open museum for the art, craft and architecture of South India. Explore the 18 authentic, traditional home styles and then buy some lovely trinkets at the crafts bazaar.
*dakshinachitra.net*

## WHERE TO SHOP

**Naturally Auroville**
A great little store filled with beautiful things like handmade paper, fragrant soaps, incense sticks and wind chimes, this is a must-visit for the aesthete. Located unobtrusively on Khader Nawaz Khan Road, the shop is pleasantly green and peaceful, befitting of its Auroville association. Buy products from the Mother's Ashram, including delightful stationery and small décor items.
*naturallyaurovillechennai.com*

**Gold**
What's Chennai without its gold? If you want the flavour of a busy market, you can head to T Nagar's boisterous gold market to pick up a little something for yourself. For somewhere understated and infinitely more peaceful, jewellery designer Ahalya runs Ras Vihar, a bespoke jewellery store near Alwarpet, where each piece is handcrafted and the different ranges will suit all styles. Don't miss their chunky jewellery range Geo for statement rings and other unique pieces.
*rasvihar.com*

**Evolv**
For a fix of edgy designer clothes, check out Evolv on Chamiers Road where you can find names such as Rohit Gandhi + Rahul Khanna and Namrata Joshipura as well as labels like Small Shop and House of Three. If you like a contemporary take on things, you'll like what they're doing at Evolv.
*vlove.in*

## WHERE TO STAY

**ITC Grand Chola**
It's called grand and boy, does it live up to its name. Spread over eight acres, this is the largest city hotel in the country and one of the most opulent and luxurious. The architecture is a tribute to the Chola dynasty while the high-tech facilities are a nod to the needs of the modern-day traveller. A fabulous place to stay, this is also the world's largest LEED Platinum-certified hotel, which means it's one of the greenest hotels in the country – a fact you can celebrate at one of its 10 dining options.
*0091-44-2220 0000, itchotels.in/hotels/itcgrandchola*

**The Park Pod**
It's small and quirky and that's why we love it. Designer boutique hotels have an intimacy that you can't find in large hotels and The Park Pod provides a warm atmosphere with a side of cool. Located on the stylish Khader Nawaz Khan Road, the address of all things edgy, this 20-room hotel is the brainchild of designer Vikram Phadke and will appeal to the more artistically inclined.
*0091-44-4295 5580, theparkhotels.com/chennai-park-pod*

## SHORT TRIP

**Fisherman's Cove**
Of the five Taj hotels in the city, this one takes the cake along with the batter. A beautiful property located on the beach, the Vivanta by Taj at Fisherman's Cove makes for a great day trip, though we recommend you stay the night for a proper experience. The 1.5-hour drive along the East Coast Road is partly sea-lined and you begin to relax from the minute you leave town. Once at Fisherman's Cove, have a seafood meal on the beach and spend a few hours walking by the water or relaxing at the spa.
*vivantabytaj.com*

Incredible India



The vertical gardens at the ITC Gardenia



# BANGALORE

Leafy and lovely, the Garden City quietly stays ahead of the game. Be it molecular gastronomy or pub culture, boutique stores or cool cafés, it happened in Karnataka's cosmopolitan capital, Bangalore, first. Currently its food scene is dominated by Asian cuisine and its pub culture is as vibrant as ever.

## WHERE TO EAT

### The Fatty Bao

Since its opening, chef Manu Chandra's popular restaurant has branched out to Mumbai and recently to New Delhi but the original outlet in Bangalore's food hub, Indiranagar, remains unmatched thanks to its rooftop location. Enjoy the city's lovely weather on the open terrace as you marvel over house favourites such as crispy fish *bao* and pork belly with miso jam. There are plenty of snacks as well as mains such as curries and rice, but we suggest you stick to ordering a large variety of starters including the grilled meats, pot-stickers and, of course, open and closed *baos*. Everything is delicious.
*0091-80-4411 4499*

### Dakshin

As you would expect, there are many decent places for South Indian cuisine in the city – from the no-frills Mavalli Tiffin Room to the café-style South Indies – but if you're going to have one local meal, head to the old-world ITC Windsor hotel on Golf Course Road for their South Indian restaurant. With staples from Kerala, Andhra, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, anything you opt for at Dakshin is going to wow your palate. Light-as-air *appams* with delicately flavoured stew, crisp and flaky *parotas* with spicy fries – it's a world of culinary delight. Save room for the refreshing *elanneer payasam*, a dessert of tender coconut in coconut milk.
*0091-80-2226 9898, itchotels.in/hotels/itcwindsor/dakshin-restaurant*

### DYU Art Café

You can't come to Bangalore and not visit one of its small, quirky cafés, an intrinsic part of the city's socio-cultural fabric. Located in an old bungalow in Koramangala, DYU is an open-air space that serves a dual purpose, as an art gallery and a café. Combining books and food, shopping and food, art and food is typical in Bangalore, with its young crowd patronising any establishment that deviates a bit from the norm. At DYU, you can view an exhibition, sit and work as you order a sandwich and coffee, or meet an old friend over a breakfast of their fluffy omelettes.
*0091-97-4207 6685, dyuartcafe.yolasite.com*

WORDS: KALYANI PRASHER; PHOTO: CORBIS



Rooftop bar Bang has sweeping views of the city


Bangalore is known for its green spaces including Cubbon Park

## WHERE TO DRINK

**Bang**

It's anyone's guess whether this rooftop bar got its name from its location bang in the centre of the city, at The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore on Residency Road, or from the jolt you get as soon as you step out on to the terrace thanks to the fabulous, sweeping views over the city. A fairly new addition to the city's nightlife scene, this is the spot for heady cocktails and celebrity DJs. There's even a fire-pit for those occasional chilly nights in the southern city, around which you can huddle with your friends and celebrate a special moment – or just life.
*0091-80-4965 3409, ritzcarlton.com/en/properties/bangalore*

**Monkey Bar**

"Come thirsty" is the war cry from Bangalore's favourite MoBar, which has already become an institution. Crazy interiors match crazily named drinks such as Goose's Bum (spirits and gooseberry) and Monkey Mule (spirits and hops) at this bar in posh Ashok Nagar, and the vibe is always energetic with lively music and loud chatter. Monkey Bar is famous for introducing the cocktail Mangaa to Bangalore, as well as the delectable MoBar Burger. In fact, the food's so good it's hard to decide whether to come back for the grub or the cocktails.
*0091-80-4111 6878, mobar.in*

**High Ultra Lounge**

Routinely rated the best new bar-lounge in the city, High Ultra Lounge has replaced Skyye Bar in UB City as the ultimate party destination. It helps that it sits 420ft high at the top of the World Trade Centre building and offers equally stunning views. Catch the last rays of the sun at High View and then head to High Mix where you mixology is practised like an art form.
*0091-80-4567 4567, highultralounge*

## WHAT TO SEE

**Catch a play**

Located in JP Nagar, Ranga Shankara is one of the most respected performing arts institutions in the country, with some high-profile performances scheduled year-round. The Stage hosts a play a day (except when it's closed on Mondays) and you can be assured of fine theatre no matter when you show up. Look out for the annual theatre festival which begins on October 27 this year.
*0091-80-2659 2777, rangashankara.org/home/rangatest/*

**Explore its green heart**

Bangalore's nickname "Garden City" comes from the city's numerous public parks and gardens. One such garden is Cubbon Park, situated right in the centre of Bangalore, a vast green stretch of land. Around 300 acres of lush foliage is yours to explore as you take a step away from the buzzing city and spend some time with nature. Several bird species can be spotted at the park, but this is a tree-lover's paradise with over 6,000 varieties.

## WHERE TO SHOP

**Pudu**

Shirts and accessories from Pudu are all the rage in India, and its store in Bangalore is located in Indiranagar. The brand was created by Australian-India brothers Michael and Andrew Piers, and the colourful shirts in breathable fabrics, named after destinations around the world such as Milan and Amalfi, have become the item to own this season.
*puduworld.com*

**Chumbak**

Take back a bit of India from this one-of-a-kind store that first started selling India-themed fridge magnets. The Chumbak store in Koramangala has expanded to sell everything from mobile phone covers to colourful T-shirts in crazy Indian prints.
*chumbak.com*

## WHERE TO STAY

**The Ritz-Carlton, Bangalore**

One of the newest and most luxurious hotels in town, the country's only Ritz-Carlton is home to the fabulous Asian restaurant The Lantern as well as the 17,000sqft, sumptuous Ritz Spa. There's no better place in town for a decadent stay.
*0091-80-4914 8000, ritzcarlton.com/en/properties/bangalore*

**ITC Gardenia**

A stone's throw from The Ritz-Carlton is the beautiful ITC Gardenia, which first introduced the concept of vertical gardens when it opened a few years ago. A charming open space that is certified eco-friendly, the hotel houses popular Japanese restaurant Edo as well as a swanky bar.
*0091-80-2211 9898, itchotels.in/hotels/itcgardenia*

**Escape**

This small boutique hotel in Indiranagar is artsy and designed to resemble a quaint English home. Everything about it is chic and bespoke, from the notebook in your room to Ally Matthan toiletries in the bathroom. The perfect mix of style and comfort, plus Bricklane Grill is a great restaurant serving Parsi and modern Indian cuisine, making this an experience to savour.
*0091-80-4241 5555, escapehotels.in*

## SHORT TRIP

**GROVER VINEYARDS**

If you're heading out of the city for just a day, why not make it indulgent? Take a tour of Indian grape-maker Grover's Vineyards in Nandi Hills in Karnataka, just a short drive out of the city, and learn about the art of viticulture. Spread over 400 acres, the first sight of the vineyards is balm for the soul as the rolling landscape stretches, endless and green. Guided tours start at 10.30am every day and last about five hours, including lunch and a grape-tasting. There's no accommodation on-site so when you've had your fill, return to Bangalore for the night.
*About 40km from Bangalore; groverzampa.in*

Incredible India



The opulent décor of The Golden Chariot

# LUXURY TRAINS

Enjoy unhurried luxury as the journey becomes part of your destination aboard these lavish trains. The best way to see the Indian countryside, curated itineraries also give you a glimpse into India's great heritage.

## MAHARAJAS' EXPRESS

**Itinerary:** You have a choice of a four- or eight-day journey and five itineraries – the shorter trips cover the Golden Triangle of Delhi-Agra-Jaipur while the longer ones include these in addition to some of the greatest historical cities including Varanasi and Ajanta in Maharashtra. Iitineraries include all the important sites in each city the train halts at, but you have the option of skipping the sites you want.

**Experience:** Maharajas' Express offers a choice of three suite categories as well as a deluxe cabin, all with fabulous views. The rooms have all the necessary comforts such as a bathtub in your en-suite bathroom, luxury toiletries, temperature-control, a flatscreen TV with a DVD player, Wi-Fi and a complimentary mini bar. The cost includes all meals including drinks, and guided off-board tours, including entry fees. There are two ornate and old-world restaurants, Mayur Mahal and Rang Mahal, where you can enjoy fine Indian and international cuisine with a great grape list. Then retire to the Rajah Club or Safari Bar for an invigorating evening and some chatter.

**Cost:** Starting from AED 14,140 for two (three nights in a deluxe cabin), increasing to AED 50,680 for two (seven nights in a suite). If you want to pull out all the stops, the Presidential Suite is AED 47,370 for the four-day trip and AED 87,030 for the longer journeys.

*the-maharajas.com*

## PALACE ON WHEELS

**Itinerary:** The one-week journey follows the Delhi-Jaipur-Sawai Madhopur-Chittorgarh-Udaipur-Jaisalmer-Jodhpur-Bharatpur-Agra-Delhi route.

**Experience:** The concept of a "moving palace", a sense of luxury travel that echoes the lifestyle of the Rajasthan royals of yore, was first introduced on the Palace On Wheels. India's oldest luxury train, it was launched in 1984, even though the first tourist train was flagged off only in 1993. After over a decade of service, it had come into serious disrepair, but in 2009 the train was fully refurbished and upgraded to match modern luxury trains. Since then, the Palace On Wheels has regained its popularity, offering plush interiors, fine dining, great sightseeing and efficient service. The two restaurants, Maharaja and Maharani, serve Indian, Chinese and Continental food, as well

WORDS: KALYANI PRASHER; PHOTO: CORBIS



A lavish guest room on The Golden Chariot

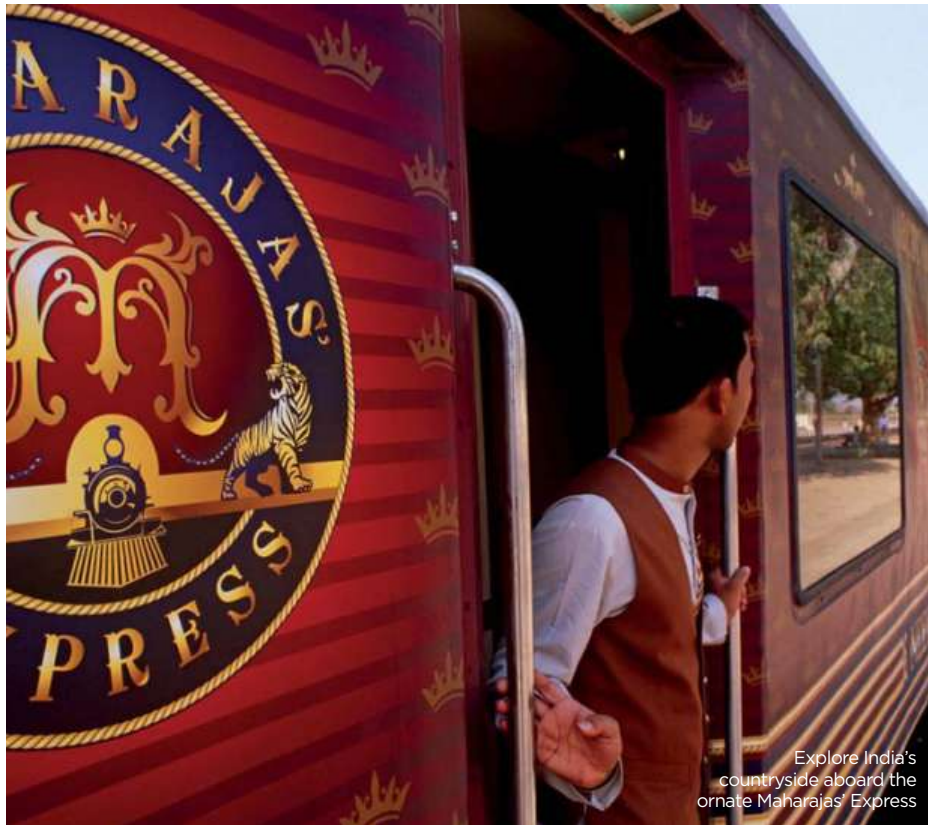
as grape and spirits. To unwind, there's a spa on-board and the service is faultless.
**Cost:** Starting from AED 15,790 per person for the entire journey, all inclusive.
*palaceonwheels.net*

## ROYAL RAJASTHAN ON WHEELS

**Itinerary:** The eight-day journey follows the Delhi-Jodhpur-Udaipur-Chittorgarh-Sawai Madhopur-Jaipur-Khajurao-Varanasi-Agra-Delhi route.
**Experience:** After the success of the Palace On Wheels, its creators came up with a new train that could run on an alternate and expanded route. Despite the name, Royal Rajasthan on Wheels not only takes you to the best sights and sounds of the desert state but also covers other important destinations of interest such as Khajuraho and Varanasi. Experiences off the train include a memorable boat cruise in Udaipur and an *aarti* (lamp offering) on the historical ghats of Varanasi. After a day of exploring you can return to the comfort of your deluxe cabin or suite and update Instagram over the high-speed Wi-Fi. Wooden furniture and silk drapes keep the ambience warm and luxurious, while the well-trained staff cater to your every need. If you're so inclined, there's a meeting room as well as a fitness centre.
**Cost:** Starting from AED 2,300 per person per night for a twin deluxe room, increasing to AED 6,245 per suite per night, all inclusive.
*rtdc.rajasthan.gov.in*

## DECCAN ODYSSEY

**Itinerary:** Choose from six eight-day journeys that follow different routes, on which you can explore Maharashtra, Gujarat or a combination of Maharashtra and north and south Indian destinations.
**Experience:** It's also called the Blue




Explore India's countryside aboard the ornate Maharajas' Express

Limousine on Rolling Wheels, and it snakes around some of western India's loveliest locations – from the World Heritage Site of Ajanta and Ellora Caves to the rolling vineyards of Nashik; from the lush and dense Gir National Park to the stark and stunning Rann of Kutch. The northern itineraries include the usual suspects like Agra and Varanasi, while on the southern journeys you can explore gems such as Hampi and Bijapur as well as the regal city of Hyderabad – but this train is best suited to those who are looking to explore Maharashtra or Gujarat in the west. The richly decorated cabins come with Wi-Fi and all the modern conveniences, and you can exchange travel notes with fellow travellers at the multi-cuisine restaurant and bar. There's a spa on board offering basic massages, and even a conference and events car. Should you fancy, you can also arrange to have your wedding on board and start your very own odyssey.
**Cost:** From AED 21,340 per person in a deluxe cabin, increasing to AED 46,190 per person for the Presidential Suite, all inclusive. If you are travelling with children above the age of six, you'll have to book two cabins at a slightly lower rate.
*deccan-odyssey-india.com*

## THE GOLDEN CHARIOT

**Itinerary:** One-week journey that covers Karnataka and Goa. The train follows the Bangalore-Mysore-Kabini-Hassan-Belur-Sravanbelagola-Hampi-Aihole-Pattadakal-Badami-Goa route. There are two alternate itineraries: Pride of South India, which is a shorter version of the original itinerary, and Southern Splendour, which includes beautiful destinations outside Karnataka such as Puducherry.
**Experience:** Named after the world-famous Sun Temple in Hampi, Karnataka Tourism's luxury train offers heritage, beach, wildlife and local flavours. Each coach is named after mighty dynasties, like Kadamba and Hoysala, who ruled Karnataka over the centuries, and each room comes with all the comforts and amenities that you would expect from a five-star hotel. The two restaurants, Nala and Ruchi, serve delicious local and international fare while Madira is where you can unwind over a drink. There is a gym coach, two massage rooms and a conference coach that can seat up to 30 people. The off-train itineraries are tailor-made to give you the best highlights of the regions with trained guides and an efficient staff in tow.
**Cost:** From AED 2,790 per person per night, increasing to AED 19,540 per person for the entire journey, all inclusive.
*thegoldenchariot.org*

Incredible India

# MOST WANTED

A look at what caught our eye this month, from mountain retreats to urban escapes



## COASTAL SPLENDOUR

Retreat to the Ramada Caravela Beach Resort on the pristine shores of Varca Beach in Goa. The hotel's colonial architecture – created by international design group Wimberly, Allison, Tong and Goo – illustrates the region's rich Portuguese and Goan heritage. The 199 guest rooms, suites and villas each include a private balcony with views of the Indian Ocean, landscaped gardens or the swimming pool. The restaurants and bars present a range of local and international culinary delicacies and exotic cocktails. Guests can get active at the resort's nine-hole par 3 golf course, the swimming pool and the scenic jogging track or unwind with yoga sessions and bespoke therapeutic treatments at the Ayurvedic spa.
*ramadacaravela.com*



## Urban retreat

The Dusit Devarana New Delhi offers a tranquil destination in the centre of the city. Surrounded by lush landscaping, the retreat is the ultimate escape from the sights and sounds of the Indian capital. Revitalise at the Devarana Spa and experience The Heavenly Nantha Garden Experience, a treatment incorporating Thai, Ayurveda and shiatsu treatments, or dive into the 102m-long outdoor swimming pool. Enjoy the fine-dining venues, including contemporary Chinese cuisine at Chi Ni and international gastronomy at Kiyan; end the evening with drinks on the veranda at Iah Bar. The hotel offers a selection of premium guest rooms – from the Devarana Garden View Room overlooking the gardens, to the Devarana Pool View Room with access to a private deck and swimming pool.
*dusit.com/dusitdevarana/newdelhi*

## *Himalayan voyage*

Explore the roof of the world from The Grand Dragon Hotel Ladakh, nestled amidst the Himalayas. The festive season package (valid from October 22 to November 15) offers an exclusive four-night stay for Diwali or Dussehra including airport pick-up, breakfast, high tea, dinner, exclusive discounts and one side trip. Choose from expeditions to the moonscapes of Lamayuru and majestic monasteries; off-road adventures to Khardung La; or camping under the stars at the banks of Pangong Tso, one of Asia's largest brackish lakes. After a day of exploration, recharge at the Stok View Terrace – offering an array of Ladakhi, Indian, Chinese and European dishes, overlooking a panoramic view of the magnificent landscapes.
*Festive package, AED 2,515; thegranddragonladakh.com*



## Adventure haven

Discover the peaks of the Himalayas from The Khyber Himalayan Resort & Spa, Gulmarg. The hotel features 85 guest rooms overlooking majestic mountain ranges. Situated steps away from the highest ski lift in the world, the property is the ideal winter destination for skiing and adventure treks through the snow-capped mountains and lakes. During the spring and summer season, guests can embark on various activities such as hiking, trekking, trout fishing, mountain biking and golfing at the world's highest 18-hole golf course. The resort offers the ultimate post-adventure relaxation treatments at The Khyber Spa by L'Occitane, providing holistic therapies inspired by the rituals of Provence, France with stunning vistas from all treatment rooms.
*slh.com/hotels/the-khyber-himalayan-resort-and-spa*









*Because you've both vowed never to settle for the ordinary!*









You certainly looked beyond the ordinary when you found each other. So when it comes to your 'big day', it's time to discover the extraordinary Ramada Caravela. This South Goa 5-star beachfront resort sprawls across 24 acres of lush green landscape.

With lavishly appointed accommodations to seduce your guests, Goa's largest free-form swimming pool, and indoor and outdoor banqueting facilities that add to the allure. Our multi-cuisine culinary delights, meanwhile, cast their own delectable spell. So come exchange your vows here, before you settle down to a life less ordinary.

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**Owned and Operated by: Advani Hotels & Resorts (India) Ltd.**

# MOST WANTED

A look at what caught our eye this month, from culinary gems to exotic escapes



## ASIAN OPULENCE

Following on from its success in London, food connoisseurs can now experience the finest in Asian dining at the recently launched Novikov Restaurant & Bar at the Sheraton Grand Hotel, Dubai on Sheikh Zayed Road. Executive chef Shane Macneill presents an eclectic menu of signature dishes such as black cod rolls, toro tartare and Novikov duck salad in a contemporary setting. The Seafood Market offers premium fish from Portugal, while diners can witness the theatre of their dishes being prepared in the open kitchen. The restaurant-meets-lounge also features a private dining area with a dedicated waiter, private lift and customised menus for large groups and special occasions.
*novikov-dubai.com*

## TASTE OF ITALY

Experience the finest in Italian gastronomy at the Grand Hotel Tremezzo, featuring scenic views of Lake Como, the Riviera delle Azalee and the rose-tinted Grigne Mountains. The historic hotel presents culinary delights under the direction of the founder of modern Italian cuisine, Gualtiero Marchesi. The Michelin-starred chef oversees an array of restaurants including La Terrazza, overlooking Lake Como for an al fresco dining experience, and T Pizza, a charming spot where Italy's signature dish is cooked in a wood-fired oven.
*grandhoteltremezzo.com*





## Future tech

Technology aficionados can now enhance their viewing experience with the Sony BRAVIA™ 4K Android and full HD television series. For the first time, Sony's features will support Google's latest Android TV operating system, providing a seamless integration with your mobile devices. The new ultra-slim range allows users to stream videos and broadcast content from mobile devices with improved picture clarity, colour accuracy and contrast. Perfect also for checking out your holiday snaps in high-definition.
*sony-mea.com*



# Discover paradise

Visitors to Sri Lanka will soon have a new address to escape to with the imminent launch of the Anantara Peace Haven Tangalle Resort, the first Anantara in the country, set on the secluded beaches off the southern coast. Situated in a 21-acre coconut plantation, with easy access to local cultural attractions and wildlife reserves, the enchanting resort will offer 152 guest rooms and pool villas featuring bespoke Sri Lankan décor with contemporary facilities. Enjoy an array of fine-dining options ranging from international cuisine at Journeys, to the Verele beach restaurant for authentic Sri Lankan-inspired teppanyaki. Guests can unwind and soothe their mind, body and spirit with treatments rooted in the ancient holistic healing practice of Ayurveda at the Anantara Spa.
*Opens at the end of 2015, anantara.com*



# Greek odyssey

Embark on a culinary journey to Greece without leaving the Middle East at the new Dubai eatery, Mythos Kouzina & Grill. Prepared by Chef Ilias Kokoroskos, the restaurant offers an assortment of authentic Greek dishes ranging from chicken *souvlaki* and gyros wrapped in pita bread to *loukoumades,* sweet dumplings served with honey and walnuts. The powdered stone finished walls, rustic marble tabletops and handmade tiles from Crete provide a charming setting to complete your voyage to the Greek isles.
*mythoskouzina.com*

# Modern revival

Doha's award-winning restaurant, Market by Jean-Georges at the W Doha Hotel & Residences has undergone a contemporary refurbishment. The new design reflects the menu's fusion of international cuisine with Middle Eastern flair, influenced by celebrity chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten. The reinvigorated design incorporates New Calcutta marble steps and countertops offering a refined feel, contrasted with rustic oak and ribbed timber panels and antique bronze metalwork to create a cosy yet cool environment.
*marketdoha.com*



# SPA TREAT

With the temperatures dropping in the Middle East, now is the ideal time to enjoy the beach and get back in shape. The Spa at The Address Dubai Marina offers signature slimming and detox treatments utilising premium products from Natura Bissé and Thémaé. Experience the Slimming Ceremony, offering a lymphatic leg massage and Chinese suction cups to detoxify and tone the skin. Revitalise with the Super Detox Wrap featuring a green tea body scrub infused with a Spirulina Algae Wrap for the ultimate antioxidant treatment.
*theaddress.com*





The artisanal décor complements the Lebanese menu

# *Authentic* TASTE

## Transport yourself to another world at Em Sherif

You might think you took a turn off Sheikh Zayed Road into Beirut on arriving at Levantine dining destination, Em Sherif. Though located in the heart of Downtown Dubai, overlooking picturesque views of the Dubai fountains and the Burj Khalifa, the restaurant's bold décor of royal blue hues complemented by eclectic furnishings including artisanal tiles, mirrors and doors are designed to recall an antique Lebanese mansion. Stepping in, guests are transported back in time to the homes of their ancestors.

The journey continues with the extensive menu, where every dish is from Em Sherif owner and founder Mireille Hayek's personal recipe collection, offering Middle Eastern flavours inspired by Levantine history and culture. Savour signature dishes that span the range from *fattoush* with aubergine to *tabekh* Em Sherif and a perfect end with *mouhallabiyye*, a traditional Lebanese pudding infused with vanilla and pistachio. The lighter lunch menu is ideal for a business lunch or those looking for a quick bite. Guests can complete the dining experience with shisha, now available indoors.

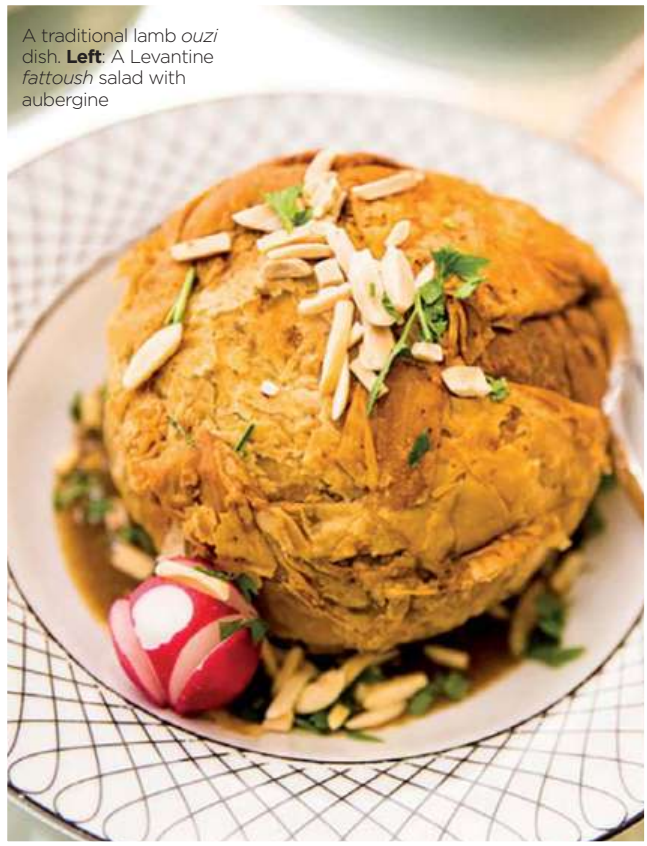
Enjoy the experience of a home away from home with the finest in Middle Eastern hospitality at Em Sherif.

*For more information call 00971-4-4243 000 or visit emsherif.com*



Bold patterns and intricate tiles add a pop of colour

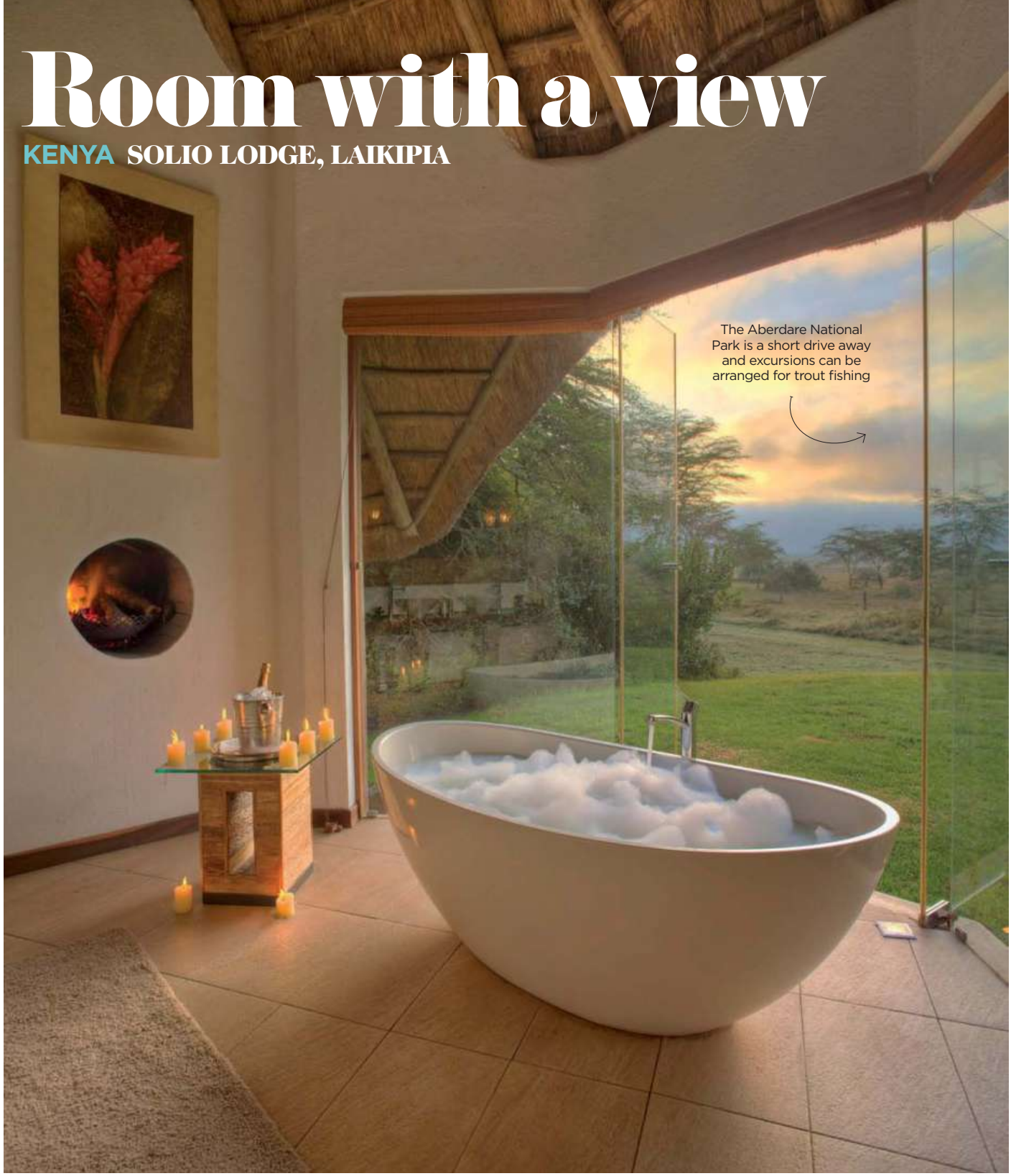




A traditional lamb *ouzi* dish. **Left**: A Levantine *fattoush* salad with aubergine

# Room with a view

## KENYA SOLIO LODGE, LAIKIPIA



The Aberdare National Park is a short drive away and excursions can be arranged for trout fishing

WORDS: RHEA SARAN; PHOTO: STEVIE MANN

## COTTAGE TWO

None of the sprawling, thatched-roof guest cottages at this charming six-room lodge in the 19,000-acre Solio Game Reserve are exactly alike. The contemporary theme is realised with individual details in each suite, though they all come with striking, panoramic views of the surrounding landscape including Mount Kenya in the distance. In Cottage Two, a log fire warms the homey living area – nights can be chilly at this altitude – and the bedroom is anchored by an invitingly large bed from where you might just spot an impala or perhaps a rhino or two, thanks to the neighbouring wildlife conservancy geared to protect and grow the populations of white and black rhinoceros.

The standalone tub in the airy bathroom – with its own fireplace that can be lit on request – opens on to a private patch of garden, allowing you to unwind after a day of game drives, helicopter touring or horseback riding through the hills without entirely leaving the great outdoors behind.

*From AED 2,500 per person including full board, airstrip transfers, game drives, some activities, house beverages, laundry, bush breakfasts and sundowners; 00254-731-91-4732, thesafaricollection.com/properties/solio-lodge*


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